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Bearing Witness: Scaling People, Place, and Politics in the Architectural Models of West Mexico

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Bearing Witness: Scaling People, Place, and Politics in the Architectural Models of West Mexico

by

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Dedication

Dedicated to my mother, Tremel Hicks, and to all of my family and friends who have supported my academic journey.

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Abstract

Bearing Witness: Scaling People, Place, and Politics in the Architectural Models of West Mexico

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Throughout Mesoamerica, artisans utilized small-scale figurines to create narrative scenes that crystallized ephemeral performance. While most of these scenes can be freely arranged and handled, examples from West Mexico stand apart. They are unique in their attention to not only place, but also people, as ornamented figurines are rooted within miniaturized representations of the built environment. Capturing dynamic moments in clay, these objects offer glimpses into an ancient region that has been negatively impacted by modernization, time, and heavy looting. Spectators witness pole-climbing rituals, feasting events, and mortuary processions, continuously observing how space contributed to communal gathering and participation.

Unfortunately, this repeated emphasis upon communal gathering, in addition to the small-scale and limited provenience of the ceramics, have led scholars to dismiss the objects as potent forms of socio-political expression. Yet, as one of the few forms of

material culture within West Mexico that contains not only figural representation, but narrative scenes, these maquettes must have embodied various modes of intimate knowledge for ancient peoples, just as they offer important insight for contemporary scholars.

In this paper, I propose that the maquettes are not merely anecdotal forms, but objects that offer insight into the socio-political complexities of the region. In their emulation of people and place, they invite the spectator to mediate upon spaces that served as arenas for social performances and the socialized bodies that gathered within those spaces. Solidifying people, performance, and the built environment in clay, these tableau-like models stage the social relationships and interactions that were forged within public patio spaces. These maquettes invite investigation into questions of individuality and collectivity, social and ritual practices, and the ways in which architecture and action were both scaled up and scaled down in West Mexican artistic traditions.

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Introduction

Although the moment is solidified in clay, the vitality of the figures – their activity and interactions – infuse the ceramic model with dynamic movement (Fig. 1). The elongated tableau emphasizes the march of the people, as they move towards a house decorated with a fringed awning and roof comb. Within the procession, participants pierce their cheeks with rods (Fig. 2). Some are linked together in a row while others bear individual poles and carry textiles upon their heads. A cylindrical bundle commands attention, as its large scale holds ample space within the procession. Another set of people wait to receive this incoming group. Musicians blow conch shells, and once again, we see individual participants piercing their cheeks with rods while balancing a plate of food or incense. As a whole, the moment, while crystallized in clay, comes alive through the body language and activities of the personages and appeals to the senses.

Such small-scale "scenes" were not uncommon within Mesoamerica, as artisans attempted to capture ephemeral events through durable materials. One recently discovered example hails from the Maya region during the Classic period. In 2006, Michelle Rich and colleagues discovered an assemblage of 23 figurines at El Perú-Waka' located at the feet of an interred king.[1] At Monte Albán within Oaxaca, Alfonso Caso uncovered a group of 16 ceramic and stone figures within Tomb 103.[2]

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[1] Daniel Finamore and Stephen D. Houston, eds., *Fiery Pool: The Maya and the Mythic Sea* (Salem, MA: Peabody Essex Museum, 2010), 98.

[2] For more information, see Alfonso Caso, "Resumen del Informe de las Exploraciones en Oaxaca, durante la 7a y 8a Temporadas 1937-1938 y 1938-1939," in *Actas del XXVII Internacional Congreso de Americanistas* (n.p., 1942).

However, West Mexican maquettes stand apart, as the figures are rooted in place within miniaturized representations of the built environment. Anchored upon the tableau, the people are firmly located within a space that corresponds directly to the ancient built environments of West Mexican civilizations.[3] They process to houses, perform ceremonial events within patio spaces, and act as spectators along the edges of ball courts. As contemporary viewers, we are compelled to ask several questions: Why anchor the figures to the tableau? Why did the artisan afford so much attention to viewership, providing an almost bird's eye vantage point to anyone approaching or handling the object? And what roles did these objects, which are so specific in their depictions, play within West Mexican societies?

I propose that the answers to these questions lie within a maquette's ability to capture and crystallize certain socio-political dynamics of West Mexican societies. Rather than giving unbridled agency to a viewer, however, any individual model "limits the range of variation that a spectator's perception may experience."[4] We are invited to view the scene, but we cannot re-arrange the figures; they are immobile. We are also invited to meditate not just upon people, but the *spaces* that they inhabit. These objects signal the importance of place through their figural representations of public spaces, houses, and ball courts. As social spaces were fundamental in "the creation and

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[3] Hasso von Winning and Olga Hammer, *Anecdotal Sculpture of Ancient West Mexico* (Los Angeles: Ethnic Arts Council of Los Angeles, 1972); Kristi Butterwick, "Days of the Dead: Ritual Consumption and Ancestor-Worship in an Ancient West Mexican Society" (PhD diss., University of Colorado Boulder, 1998).

[4] Douglass W. Bailey, "The Anti-Rhetorical Power of Representational Absence: Incomplete Figurines from the Balkan Neolithic," in *Image and Imagination*, ed. Colin Renfrew and Iain Morley (Cambridge, UK: McDonald Institute for Archeological Research, 2007), 119.

negotiation of social relations and values…," tableau models may very well stage (and perhaps re-enact or even critique) some of the social relationships and interactions that were forged within these public spaces.[5]

With this thesis, I will examine how West Mexican tableaus may provide insight into the ways in which socio-political power was expressed in the ancient past in this region of Mesoamerica. By concentrating on their depictions of space, the charged performances that took place within those spaces, and their representation of figurines, we can say something about the social function of these objects. However, due to the small-scale of these ceramics and the fact that many of them were looted, scholars have often neglected to situate them at the forefront of analyses focused on questions of social power. Yet, as Hasso von Winning notes, these images constitute "unique historical documents, that shed light on the customs of the ancient inhabitants and…. their archeological and ethnographical importance is unquestioned."[6] As one of the few forms of material culture within West Mexico that contains not only figural representation, but narrative scenes, these objects must have embodied various modes of intimate knowledge for ancient peoples, just as they offer important insight for contemporary scholars.

FIGURINE THEORY AND MOVING BEYOND DICHOTOMIES

Studies of ancient civilizations "often privilege stone monuments, statements in hieroglyphic texts, and large-scale or ceremonial architecture as both the means of

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[5] Kenichiro Tsukamoto and Takeshi Inomata, "Gathering in an Open Space," introduction to *Mesoamerican Plazas: Arenas of Community and Power* (Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 2014), 5.
[6] Hasso Von Winning, *The Shaft Tomb Figures of West Mexico* (Los Angeles: Southwest Museum, 1974), xxii.

constituting and the constituting features of the state."[7] As a result, small-scale artifacts are often relegated to the "private" and "domestic" realm and are consequentially seen as less influential in their ability to influence socio-political systems.[8] Throughout much scholarship, authority has become wrapped up in monumentality and the durability of stone. In contrast, clay has often been perceived as an "unpretentious medium" used to construct objects of an "unimposing scale."[9] For this reason, figurines have often been "construed to index commoners, women, children, or complementary and diffuse power structures."[10]

However, recent figurine theory challenges such assumptions, reminding us that figurines "not only reflect culture but also, because they possess and are imbued with cultural meaning, play a role in shaping the thoughts, behaviors, and customs of people."[11] Just as people actively manipulate materials in order to express abstract concepts (ancestry, gender, power), so too do materials shape how people interact with one another.

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[7] Christina T. Halperin, *Maya Figurines: Intersections between State and Household* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014), 1-2.
[8] Julia Guernsey, *Sculpture and Social Dynamics in Preclassic Mesoamerica* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 1-4, digital file.
[9] Judy Sund, "Beyond the Grave: The Twentieth-Century Afterlife of West Mexican Burial Effigies," The Art Bulletin 82, no. 4 (December 2000): 742, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3051420.
[10] Christina Halperin and Katherine A. Faust, "Approaching Mesoamerican Figurines," in *Mesoamerican Figurines: Small-Scale Indices of Large-Scale Social Phenomena*, ed. Christina T. Halperin, et al. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009), 4.
[11] Halperin and Faust, "Approaching Mesoamerican," 11.

Miniaturization invokes a different, yet similarly powerful set of behavioral responses from spectators than large-scale monuments.[12] While the latter directs movement and sight, small-scale objects, such as the tableaus, are capable of being held and transported.[13] They can be molded, broken, adorned, reconfigured, and placed by people with ease. Miniaturization also comes with considerations regarding what Douglass Bailey calls the representational importance of absence. Figurines are "part of a process rather than a finished and contained product."[14] So when considering small-scale works, scholars must also acknowledge how ancient societies made deliberate selections concerning what should and should not be represented. Such intentional selections allow figurines to "forcibly engage people manipulating or viewing them in making inferences that go beyond what is literally present."[15] In this way, these small-scale objects empower viewers by reducing the world-at-large to a scale that can be manipulated and managed. Yet, when one considers the intricacy of West Mexican tableaus, one must also consider who is allowed to access to this world.

Such questions also bring light to current debates about what figurines themselves achieve versus models. Throughout his published literature on figurines, Douglass Bailey

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[12] Ibid, 3-4; Douglass W. Bailey, "The Anti-Rhetorical Power of Representational Absence: Incomplete Figurines from the Balkan Neolithic," in *Image and Imagination*, ed. Colin Renfrew and Iain Morley (Cambridge, UK: McDonald Institute for Archeological Research, 2007), 122-125; Bailey, *Prehistoric Figurines*; Rosemary A. Joyce, "Figurines, Meaning and Meaning-making in Early Mesoamerica," in *Image and Imagination*, ed. Colin Renfrew and Iain Morley (Cambridge, UK: McDonald Institute for Archeological Research, 2007); Guernsey, *Sculpture and Social*, 10-11, 110-111.

[13] Halperin and Faust, "Approaching Mesoamerican," 8.

[14] Lynn Meskell, "The Archeology of Figurines and the Human Body in Prehistory," in *The Oxford Handbook of Prehistoric Figurines*, ed. Timothy Insoll (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2017), 23.

[15] Rosemary A. Joyce, "Making a World of Their Own: Mesoamerican Figurines and Mesoamerican Figurine Analysis," in *Mesoamerican Figurines: Small-Scale Indices of Large-Scale Social Phenomena*, ed. Christina T. Halperin, et al. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009), 411.

draws stark contrasts between the two. For him, models aim for precision, seeking to "reproduce an original in a factual manner."[16] He asserts that miniatures are different from models, as the former does not attempt to capture the world with detailed accuracy.

While I agree with some of Bailey's assertions regarding models, I also suggest that West Mexican tableaus complicate such a black-and-white division. Due to their emulation of architectural forms and spaces, the objects have frequently been described as 'models'. I readily use this term throughout my study, due its definition as "a three-dimensional representation of a person or thing or of a proposed structure, typically on a smaller scale than the original."[17] A maquette certainly dictates what meanings one can draw from it, but there is undoubtedly a certain level of abstraction and absence within the work. In this way, it differs from our traditional understandings of models and certainly differs from the models that Bailey draws his conclusions from, such as ship models or architect's presentation models.

In contrast, West Mexican maquettes were not used as proposals for future building projects, and while they reference architectural features, they are not overly detailed reconstructions and carry ambiguity.[18] For example, Christopher Beekman rejects a simplified description of some ceramics models (Fig. 3) as *volador* scenes. In these tableaus, figures are shown climbing or balancing atop a pole, rather than circling it. Beekman admits that this could simply be due to the technical challenges of trying to

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[16] Douglass W. Bailey, *Prehistoric Figurines: Representation and Corporeality in the Neolithic* (New York and London: Routeledge, 2005), 29.

[17] Oxford Living Dictionaries, https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/model; Even as I use this term, I also acknowledge that it also deflates the multifaceted messaging of the object.

[18] There is little evidence that the maquettes were used as prototypes for future building projects. While some who have studied the models put the theory forward, very few actually give credibility to the idea.

depict swinging *voladores* in clay. He also proposes that the ambiguity of the ritual being performed could reference another popular pole-climbing ceremony: the Xocotl Huetzi.[19] The archeologist's excavations at the site of Llano Grande within central Jalisco support such a claim. Beekman found several shallow depressions cut into the surface of patio spaces, concluding that they were used for pole-climbing ceremonies. However, these shallow pits could not have supported the weight of the free-standing pole necessary for *volador* rituals. Based on this archeological data, he concludes that the scene's lack of specificity may have functioned as a shorthand for all pole-climbing rituals. Thus, while West Mexican models may not stretch the limits of the imagination in the same way that figurines can, they too compel viewers to contemplate upon its combination of representational absence and presence.

When analyzing the corpus of tableaus, our definitions fall short in truly grasping how to understand and describe these objects. Although they emulate the realities of the built environment, they are not bound to an exact likeness of place. Even more importantly, these objects are not vacant. They are not purely devoted to rendering spaces, but also to rendering how *people* interact within spaces. Scholarship must contend with this notion of peopled space, as our definitions thus far for the objects fall apart in the face of their morphological complexity. Occupying a liminal space between abstraction and specificity, as well 'model' and 'figurine', architectural tableaus

[19] For more on the *Xocotl Huetzi* festival and how it may relate to the pole-climbing scenes seen in West Mexican maquettes, see Christopher S. Beekman, "Agricultural Pole Rituals and Rulership in Late Formative Central Jalisco," *Ancient Mesoamerica* 14, no. 2 (September 2003): 303-312, 10.1017/S0956536103141016.

problematize our understanding of the objects and the terms which we use to define them.[20]

Although scholarship has not framed West Mexican tableaus as figurines, much of the literature regarding figurine theory aptly applies to the objects. When considering depictions of space, scholars tend to frame their discussions with the theories of Michel de Certeau or Henri Lefebvre.[21] While both delve into spatial theory, outlining how space is constructed through social phenomena, their work does not address how place can be scaled down within mimetic objects. For discussions on scale, we must turn to the work of figurine theorists, who actively question how humans interact with the natural world in miniature. Second, we must also acknowledge that the maquettes are filled with figurines; while space itself is an important factor, it is the space's ability to support communal gathering that soon becomes apparent. So, figurine theory, which often addresses corporeality and representation, becomes a vital resource for this project. And finally, just as figurines "assert a particular way of thinking, feeling, and enacting," so too do models make their own assertions about the organization of the world.[22] Taking up figurine theory in my analysis of the tableaus, I venture into new analytical territory that troubles preconceived notions of models as merely replicas.

Delving into the mimetic quality of the tableaus in addition to scale complements our understanding of these objects as models. Christina Halperin's consideration of

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[20] See Juliet B. Wiersema, *Architectural Vessels of the Moche: Ceramic Diagrams of Sacred Space in Ancient Peru* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), 25 for a brief discussion about terminology when discussing architectural models in the Andes.

[21] Wiersema, *Architectural Vessels*, 26a-30; Barbara Mundy, "Introduction," introduction to *The Death of Aztec Tenochtitlan, the Life of Mexico City* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2015), 10-15.

[22] Halperin, *Maya Figurines*, 11.

mimesis makes sense of the tableau's references to the built environment, as it "dances between a tension of presentation and the process of representing."[23] Halliwell states that the concept captures "fleeting behaviors or performances, linguistic prose, sound, and even the metaphysical."[24] Thus, mimetic objects hover within a liminal space; they are copies, but not the factual reproductions. Aristotle considered them to be not merely copies but interpretations or commentary upon their templates.[25] In their emulation of and references to previous templates, mimetic objects can also participate in a process of meaning-making as well as history-making. According to Paul Ricoeur, as Christina Halperin noted, that which is "recalled or privileged in the form of a text or representation is a mimesis of the previous action."[26] One who in turn beholds these historical representations is subject to the object's influence in its power to mold subjectivities and social identities. In their proposals of how the world should be structured and defined, mimetic objects aid in establishing and maintaining power relations.

In recent years, scholars have begun to explore the ways in which materials possess agency over the behavior, customs, and ideologies of peoples.[27] Rosemary

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[23] Halperin, *Maya Figurines*, 37.
[24] Stephen Halliwell, introduction to *The Aesthetics of Mimesis: Ancient Texts and Modern Problems* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 15.
[25] Halperin, *Maya Figurines*, 38.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Douglass Bailey, *Prehistoric Figurines*; Halperin, *Maya Figurines*; Joyce, "Making a World,"; Halperin and Faust, "Approaching Mesoamerican,"; Lynn Meskell, "The Archeology of Figurines and the Human Body in Prehistory"; Julia Guernsey, *Sculpture and Social*; Rosemary A. Joyce, "Making Something of Herself: Embodiment in Life and Death at Playa de los Muertos, Honduras," Cambridge Archaeological Journal 13, no. 02 (October 2003): 146, http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0959774303240142; Richard Lesure, *Interpreting Ancient Figurines: Context, Comparison, and Prehistoric Art* (New York,

Joyce's research ventures that small-scale ceramic figurines served as bodily precedents for societal members, such as the young women of the Honduran Playa de los Muertos culture.[28] Through their posture and ornamentation, the figures may have influenced the presentation and embodied performances of the young women, who would have looked to the objects as idealized forms. Scholarship has also acknowledged figurines' roles as active intermediaries between people and powerful forces.[29] Joyce Marcus analyzed figurines that were molded by women in Oaxaca during the Preclassic period, exploring how the adornment and performance of these objects maintained social obligations between descent groups and ancestors.[30] Seeking to co-opt the ideological authority of this extensive figural tradition, growing state powers appropriated the style and aesthetic form of figurines. Although scholarship often draws upon a top-down model when examining relationships between states and households, Julia Guernsey's research challenges such a notion. Examining the potbelly sculptural form of Guatemala, she reveals that the large-scale stone monuments take their inspiration from small-scale ceramic figurines from the Middle Preclassic.[31] Scaled up and planted within public plazas, the rise of potbelly monuments dovetailed with the rise of a centralized state seeking to monumentalize a once portable sculptural form.

NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011), digital file; Joyce Marcus, *Women's Ritual in Formative Oaxaca: Figurine-making, Divination, Death, and the Ancestors* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology, 1998).

28 Rosemary A. Joyce, "Making Something," 258.

29 See footnote 26.

30 Marcus, *Women's Ritual*, 5, 311.

31 Guernsey, *Sculpture and Social*, 110-115.

Inspired by a body of literature and theory that situates ceramics at the forefront of socio-political analyses, this thesis asserts that West Mexican tableaus are not superfluous, passive, or merely anecdotal. Rather, these objects form innovative testimonies to both the artistic and socio-political complexities of the region. Combining recent archeological data with figurine theory will allow us to dig deeper into a body of objects that have often been read as merely anecdotal. Although they "represent a speech that we do not completely understand today," recent studies have sought to contextualize the unprovenienced objects that flood the shelves of art institutions, illuminating an oft overlooked area of Mesoamerican studies.[32]

DEFINING WEST MEXICO

For years, scholars have grappled with West Mexico and its significance within Mesoamerica, placing the region within "an ambiguous insider/outsider position."[33] Due to their place on the periphery, the diverse cultures of West Mexico were haphazardly lumped together based on the presence of related architectural forms and features. Today, we generally understand the Occidente as the cultures of Nayarit, Jalisco, Colima, and Michoacán, although, in its totality, the region also encompasses Sinaloa, and parts of Durango and Zacatecas (Fig. 4).[34] As these names imply, the cultures of West Mexico were denominated by their location within their respective states. It is important to

[32] Laura Almendros López and Rafael Platas Ruiz, "Figurines in Burial Contexts in the Ortices and Comala Phases of the Valle de Colima," in *Shaft Tombs and Figures in West Mexican Society: A Reassessment*, ed. Robert Pickering and Christopher Beekman (Tulsa: Gilcrease Museum, 2016), 81.
[33] Shirley Gorenstein and Michael S. Foster, "West and Northwest Mexico: The Ins and Outs of Mesoamerica," in *Greater Mesoamerica: The Archaeology of West and Northwest Mexico* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2000), 6.
[34] Ibid.

emphasize that these societies were not delineated by modern state boundaries, and the numerous artistic styles of the region attest to its diversity.[35]

Disparate areas of West Mexico were woven together due to the presence of shaft tombs, circular architecture, and expressive hollow figurines. Once known as the West Mexican Shaft Tomb Culture or Tradition, the title gave precedence to a mortuary practice that has been used to set the region apart from other Mesoamerican cultures. Creating a shaft tomb (Fig. 5) was an exhaustive process, as ancient architects were forced to dig through soil and *tepetate* (hardpan) in order to create the shaft and accompanying chamber or chambers.[36] Once the deceased the were interred inside, the shafts were then closed and sealed with earth. These tombs, which were widespread across West Mexico, can found in different contexts. They can be found in rural areas, within populated cemeteries or in isolation. They are also found within ceremonial centers populated with temples, ball courts, and habitation areas.

Occasionally, these tombs are located beneath surface architecture (Fig. 6), which "is dominated by the circular arrangement of typically eight platforms surrounding a central circular altar, a complex known as a *guachimonton*."[37] Emerging during the Late Preclassic period (300 BCE-200 BCE), the distinctive circular architectural complexes (Fig. 7) are "surrounded by a ring-shaped patio, and the patio, in turn, is surrounded by a

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[35] For more about style, please see Robert Pickering and Cheryl Smallwood-Roberts, *The Visual Guide to West Mexico Shaft Tomb Figures* (Tulsa: Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art, 2014), 9-10.

[36] Robert Pickering and Cheryl Smallwood-Roberts, *West Mexico: Ritual and Identity* (Tulsa: Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art, 2016), 18.

[37] Christopher S. Beekman, "Settlement Patterns and Excavations: Contexts of Tombs and Figures in Central Jalisco," in *Shaft Tombs and Figures in West Mexican Society: A Reassessment*, ed. Robert Pickering and Christopher Beekman (Tulsa: Gilcrease Museum, 2016), 88.

ring-shaped banquette."[38] On top of this banquette, there are multiple platforms which house structures, perhaps homes or temples. As Christopher Beekman notes, "These were not empty ceremonial centers dedicated solely or even primarily to mortuary ritual, and other ceremonies parallel to those practiced in other Mesoamerican centers are in evidence."[39] Performing surveys of shaft tombs and surface architecture, the archeologist discovered that "tomb volume, the likelihood that the tomb is beneath architecture, and the number and elaboration of figures in these contexts increase together."[40]

West Mexico possessed an extensive figural tradition, as evidenced by the thousands of figurines housed within museum collections. During the Early Preclassic period, the societies of the Occidente were creating some of the earliest precedents to the later shaft tomb form and depositing clay figures within these crypts as signs of status and affluence. At the site of the El Opeño in Michoacán (1500-1200 BCE), J. Arturo Oliveros Morales discovered a set of eight clay figures grouped together at the entrance of the tomb.[41] According to the archeologist, the scene represents ballplayers and spectators (Fig. 8). Grouped together, the moment captures five male figures wearing padding along their legs and some also hold sticks. Three of the figures are women, and due to their lack of gear and costume, they have been interpreted as spectators to the

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[38] Alfredo Lopez Austin and Leonardo Lopez Lujan, "The Mesoamerican Classic Period," in *Mexico's Indigenous Past*, trans. Bernard R. Ortiz de Montellano (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 126.
[39] Beekman, "Settlement Patterns," 88.
[40] Ibid.
[41] J. Arturo Oliveros Morales, *Hacedores de Tumbas en El Opeño, Jacona, Michoacán* (Michoacán, Mexico: El Colegio de Michoacán, H. Ayuntamiento de Jacona, 2004), 17.

game.[42] Oliveros claims that the group represents an offering and that its depiction of "una actividad de cohesión social" lends itself to the function of the tomb itself.[43]

The region's ceramic tradition reached its florescence during the transition between the Late Preclassic and Early Classic period. Along with an emphasis on surface architecture, this time period (300 BCE – 250 CE) witnessed a greater diversity in the type of ceramics being produced, including the iconic hollow figurines that crowd museum collections.[44] Intricate hollow figurines and solid figures, along with other items such as vessels and jewelry, filled shaft tomb spaces, announcing the status of the deceased.

Although more data must be collected concerning their dating, the region's distinctive architectural models generally date to this time period as well.[45] From Jalisco to Sinaloa, tableaus have been attributed to and excavated from various cultural regions across West Mexico. Curiously, many of the known examples today hail from Nayarit,

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[42] J. Arturo Oliveros Morales, "El Opeño: Un Antiguo Cementerio en El Occidente Mesoamericano," *Ancient Mesoamerica* 17 (2006): 253-254.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Christopher S. Beekman, "Conflicting Political Strategies in Late Formative to Early Classic Central Jalisco," in Political Strategies in Pre-Columbian Mesoamerica, ed. Sarah Kurnick and Joanne Baron (Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2016), 85, 10.5876/9781607324164.c004; López and Ruiz, "Figurines in Burial," 75; Meredith Alexandra Aronson, "Technological Change: West Mexican Mortuary Ceramics" (PhD diss., University of Arizona, 1993), 114-116; Phil C. Weigand and Christopher S. Beekman, "The Teuchitlan Tradition Rise of a Statelike Society," in *Ancient West Mexico: Art and Archaeology of the Unknown Past*, ed. Richard F. Townsend (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1998), 37-40; María Teresa Cabrero García and Carlos López Cruz, "The Shaft Tombs of El Piñon, Bolaños Canyon, State of Jalisco, Mexico," *Ancient Mesoamerica* 18, no. 2 (Fall 2007): 250-251, http://www.jstor.org/stable/26309149.

[45] For more regarding radiocarbon dating of shaft tombs, see Peter T. Furst, "Shaft Tombs, Shell Trumpets, and Shamanism: A Culture- Historical Approach to Problems in West Mexican Archaeology" (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1966), 140-152, and R.E. Taylor, "The Shaft Tombs of Western Mexico: Problems in the Interpretation of Religious Function Nonhistoric Archaeological Contexts," American Antiquity 35, no. 2 (April 1970): 164-166, http://www.jstor.org/stable/278145.

and more specifically, exhibit the Ixtlán del Río style. Unfortunately, these objects are rarely found in context, and the few provenienced examples that scholars can pull were poorly documented. Reports will mention an excavated architectural model, but will not go into great detail concerning its make, morphology, or placement within the tomb.

The term 'architectural model' can refer to three distinct styles of representing the built environment. An interesting group of architectural models consists of ceramics that are void of figures and instead concentrate on the architectural landscape itself. Although none of have been found *in-situ*, their "highly-burnished brown-buff" surfaces reflect the "classic" Colima style.[46] Unlike the peopled tableaus, these objects are vessels (Fig. 9). However, while they are functional objects, their highly decorated surfaces signal that they may have been used only sparingly.

There are also cases of singular, unpeopled architectural models (Fig. 10). Recent excavations at Sinaloa have uncovered a unique *in-situ* scene comprised of "four principal figurines placed around a central plate with smaller figurines gripping each other's' shoulders in representation of a ritual placed around them, along with a model of a double temple."[47] Although the ceramic is physically detached from the figures themselves, unlike the peopled tableaus, it still plays a part in a larger figurative narrative. As many of these examples are often found alone, without the figures that may

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[46] Michael Kan, H. B. Nicholson, and Clement Meighan, *Sculpture of Ancient West Mexico: Nayarit, Jalisco, Colima : a Catalogue of the Proctor Stafford Collection at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1989), 15.

[47] Cristina Perez, trans., "Archaeologists Find Burial of Unusual Characteristics in the Mexican State of Sinaloa," ArtDaily, last modified April 27, 2018, http://artdaily.com/news/71769/Archaeologists-find-burial-of-unusual-characteristics-in-the-Mexican-State-of-Sinaloa?#.U9J-wfl_vVQ[/url.

have accompanied them, it is hard to determine whether they would have once been a part of a figural scene.

Finally, there are the peopled models of this study, which repeatedly anchor human activity to tableaus of clay. These works feature momentous events, such as funerary processions, feasts, and pole-climbing ceremonies. Figures will congregate around abstracted *guachimontones*, meet within homes to eat with one another, or gather within communal spaces bordered by hovering structures. A large number of tableaus stemming from Colima, Jalisco, and Sinaloa do not contain buildings at all (Fig. 11), but still tie their ceramic actors to clay tableaus in reference to circular patio spaces.

Although a lack of provenience and issues of authenticity trouble such a concept, with further excavations, scholars may be able to map regional differences in subject and styles.[48] Considering current data, the architectural vessels strictly hail from the Colima region. Similarly, our known corpus of house, procession, and other architectural landscape models are associated with the subregion of Nayarit, and more specifically, the area surrounding the site of Ixtlán del Rio. The most common tableau form are the circular dancing groups. The corpus of known examples exhibits the Tuxcacuesco-Ortices style, which is found in both Jalisco and Colima. A recent excavation in Sinaloa also uncovered a circular dance tableau, extending the maquettes type into Sinaloa. Hopefully, as investigations continue, scholars may be able to chart remains overall regional trends.

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[48] For more on style, see Robert Pickering and Cheryl Smallwood-Roberts, *The Visual Guide to West Mexico Shaft Tomb Figures* (Tulsa: Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art, 2014) and Hasso Von Winning, *The Shaft Tomb Figures of West Mexico* (Los Angeles: Southwest Museum, 1974).

During a time when many Mesoamerican societies were experimenting with conveying power in stone, West Mexican polities, by contrast, continued to deploy ceramic figurines as visual texts. This liminal period between the Late Precassic to Early Classic was defined by dynamic shifts in language, architecture, and sculptural forms, as authority centralized into state powers.[49] Such dynamics also occurred within the Occidente. The Late Preclassic was "distinguished by rapid population growth and expansion into many new areas, increased differentiation between subregions in the highlands, evidence for social inequalities across most of western Mexico, and rapid political centralization in some areas."[50] The region surrounding the major site of Teuchitlán experienced a demographic implosion, while other smaller sites saw a decrease in their population.[51] Archeological shows climate impacts from this moment.[52] Prestige items, such as obsidian and figurines, abound within burials located within ceremonial centers, but are seen sparingly in rural burials.[53] Moving into the Early Classic, West Mexican societies carried on their ceramic tradition. Archeological evidence indicates that the region's few stelae and other forms of worked stone date to

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[49]Guernsey, *Sculpture and Social*; Julia Guernsey, Barbara Arroyo, and John E. Clark, eds., *The Place of Stone Monuments: Context, Use, and Meaning in Mesoamerica's Preclassic Transition* (Washington, D.C: Dumbarton Oaks, 2010); Austin and Lujan, "The Mesoamerican," 101-107; Rosemary A. Joyce and David C. Grove, eds., *Social Patterns in Pre-Classic Mesoamerica: A Symposium at Dumbarton Oaks, 9 and 10 October 1993* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, c1999).

[50] Christopher S. Beekman, "Recent Research in Western Mexican Archaeology," *Journal of Archaeological Research* 18, no. 1 (March 2010): 61, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23018389.

[51] Phil C. Weigand and Christopher S. Beekman, "The Teuchitlan Tradition Rise of a Statelike Society," in *Ancient West Mexico: Art and Archaeology of the Unknown Past*, ed. Richard F. Townsend (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1998), 41-46; Aronson, "Technological Change," 74-76.

[52] Weigand and Beekman, "The Teuchitlan," 45.

[53] Christopher S. Beekman, "Los Sistemas Políticos del Formativo en los Valles de Tequila, Jalisco y su Relación con la Subsistencia.," in *Las Sociedades Complejas del Occidente de México en el Mundo Mesoamericano*, ed. Eduardo Williams, Lorenza López Mestas, and Rodrigo Esparza (Zamora, Mexico: El Colegio de Michoacán, 2009), 81.

the Late Classic/Postclassic period.[54] Thus, throughout West Mexico, social messages of status, identity, and politics continued to be rendered in clay and made portable. Manifesting the natural, as well as supernatural world, the built environment, and people, the ceramic corpus of West Mexican art offers invaluable insight into the ancient cultures of the Occidente.

The production of West Mexican architectural models appears to coincide with the dynamic period encompassing the Late Preclassic and ensuing Early Classic periods. Across Mesoamerica, elites explored "the role of sculpture in the development and dissemination of a Late Preclassic language of power."[55] West Mexican societies participated in this process of experimentation, but not through stone. Seeking to communicate and disseminate ideologies, artisans crafted hollow figurines that displayed and held symbols of status and authority.[56] The creation of the tableaus also represent a moment of innovation in cultural and material expression. Just as stelae record ephemeral performance in stone, so too do these models crystallize fleeting events in clay. Focusing on momentous occasions that were enacted within the shared space of the

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[54] Joseph B. Mountjoy, "West Mexican Stelae from Jalisco and Nayarit," *Ancient Mesoamerica* 2 (1991); Eduardo Williams, "The Stone Sculpture of Ancient West Mexico: Description and interpretation," *Ancient Mesoamerica* 2, no. 2 (Fall 1991): http://www.jstor.org/stable/26307151. Many of the stelae do not possess distinct representations of rulers or deities and are rather small in comparison to other contemporaneous examples.

[55] Julia Guernsey, *Ritual and Power in Stone: The Performance of Rulership in Mesoamerican Izapan Style Art* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2006), 15.

[56] Jennifer Pirtle, "Practical Uses of Statistical Analysis for Interpretations of Cultural Aspects of Status and Gender in the Figures of the Ixtlán del Rio Style," in *Shaft Tombs and Figures in West Mexican Society: A Reassessment*, ed. Robert Pickering and Christopher Beekman (Tulsa: Gilcrease Museum, 2016), 152-155; Butterwick, "Days of the Dead," 162-181; Lauren Wilson Norwood, "Ancestors in Clay: A Case for Portraiture in Lagunillas Style Figurines," in *Shaft Tombs and Figures in West Mexican Society: A Reassessment*, ed. Robert Pickering and Christopher Beekman (Tulsa: Gilcrease Museum, 2016), 203-204.

guachimontones, the models offer the spectator an intimate glimpse into ancient rites and rituals. Depicting bloodletting, sacred bundling, feasting, and pole-climbing rituals, the objects deliver a shared vernacular of power that was seen throughout Late Preclassic Mesoamerica.

"The West Mexican Problem"

Working with a collection of museum objects, especially ceramics, comes with an inherent set of limitations. As West Mexican figurines were cherished for their expressive features, they were also actively looted and sold on the art market. Such an enterprise has had an adverse effect on a field striving to discern the context, use, and visual messaging of these figurines. West Mexico has continuously been placed on the periphery of Mesoamerican studies, and the high frequency of looting and forgeries has only deterred scholars from critically engaging with the material culture of the region.

Fortunately, West Mexico has experienced a recent surge in archeological excavations and anthropological research which aid in measuring the authenticity of these orphaned objects.[57] Scholars such Ephrahim Cuevas, Meredith Aronson, Cheryl Smallwood-Roberts, and Robert Pickering have all tackled this complex issue of authenticity when studying ceramics from the Occidente.[58] Indexing a variety of

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[57] See Richard M. Leventhal and Brian I. Daniels, "'Orphaned Objects', Ethical Standards, and the Acquisition of Antiquities," *DePaul Journal of Art, Technology & Intellectual Property Law* 23, no. 2 (Spring 2013) for discussion on orphaned objects.

[58] See Aronson, "Technological Change"; Pickering and Smallwood-Roberts, *The Visual*; Robert B. Pickering and Ephraim Cuevas, "The Ancient Ceramics of West Mexico: Corpse-Eating Insects and Mineral Stains Help a Forensic Anthropologist and a Chemist Determine the Authenticity of 2,000-year-old Figurines," *American Scientist* 91, no. 3 (May/June 2003), http://www.jstor.org/stable/27858214.

archeological markers, such as mineral stains and puparial remains, the archeologists affirm the value of museum collections which house these orphan objects. More recently, Smallwood-Roberts and Pickering have created an "authenticity quotient" for West Mexican objects based on some of the aforementioned archeological criteria.

I have worked closely with Pickering and Smallwood-Robert's authenticity quotient in order to determine the main object of my study, including the other architectural models which I draw upon. Performing an in-depth analysis versus a survey, I will be able to readily address the authenticity of the procession model, affirming its value in relaying socio-political meaning. The tableaus provide viewers with a wealth of information that was absent from other modes of visual expression in West Mexico. Without an iconographic program captured among stelae or extant codices describing rites and ritual, these ceramics encompass a body of esoteric knowledge that cannot be so easily dismissed.

Any project examining West Mexican models must also recognize the difficulties in contextualizing and examining these objects. To date, there are only a few examples of architectural models with provenience. Threads of scholarship are slowly being woven together to create a more holistic image of early Preclassic and Classic West Mexican societies. But, it will take some time and effort before the gaps in our knowledge are filled. Thus, although the maquettes of this study exhibit the Ixtlán del Rio, Nayarit style, my research will mainly pull from archeological excavations that were conducted within Jalisco. This is not to discredit archeological work being done in Nayarit. Sites such as Las Cebollas, Amapa, Ixtlán del Rio, and San Blas have greatly added to our perception

of West Mexican societies. However, excavations surrounding the Ixtlán del Rio area have not holisitically addressed issues of socio-political complexity. Scholars such as Weigand and Beekman have all devoted themselves to such studies, and their research has been based in Jalisco. Pulling from reports and investigations from this region, I do not aim to essentialize West Mexico into a singular cultural entity. Rather, such data bolster our understanding of how these maquettes may have served as statements of power and authority.

OUTLINE FOR THESIS

The goals of this thesis are twofold. First, through an analysis of peopled space and archeological data, I speculate that architectural models were objects imbued with socio-political meaning. Analyzing the procession model, I venture that the tableau captures the dynamism of societies that do not simply abide by strict dichotomies of egalitarian versus exclusionary. Second, utilizing figurine theory, this thesis also proposes how the maquettes may have been used by the ancient peoples who created them.

"Authenticity and West Mexico" grapples with ideas of authenticity within West Mexico and how these ideas have shaped our current understanding of the culture. For years, West Mexican figurines were subject to shoddy scholarship that interpreted the objects as secular village scenes. In this chapter, I cover this complicated history of West Mexican scholarship and grapple with how issues of authenticity have troubled the field.

"People, Place, and Politics" explores the architectural landscape of the Occidente, outlining how these communal spaces were both communal and exclusionary spaces. This chapter dives into how space is molded within the architectural models and what the tableau itself presents to the spectator. Although communal activity has often been associated with egalitarianism, this chapter explores how public spaces were also sites of political and social negotiation.

Finally, in "Figuring Out the World," I address the figuration of the architectural maquettes, exploring how these are not simply spatial models, but also *peopled* models. This chapter delves into the figurines, their ornamentation, and how they display an interesting tension between standardized and individualized representation.

Authenticity and West Mexico

While archeologists have made incredible finds in the field, many museums continue to struggle when interpreting and exhibiting their West Mexican objects. Labels rehash antiquated information, relying on interpretations that have been contested in recent years.[59] Scholars face even greater challenges once they consider the authenticity of these objects. I have encountered those who treat West Mexican ceramics like criminal offenders, contending that all are modern falsifications until proven authentic. In opposition, there are scholars who maintain that such a mindset devalues an already marginalized region of Mesoamerica. Fortunately, within recent years, West Mexican scholarship has experienced a surge in research dedicated to the issue of authenticity. Yet, while such work has benefited the field, it has also unveiled the ways in which a term like 'authenticity' is highly charged and flexible.

Given current debates regarding authenticity, any academic examining museum collections and West Mexican figurines must also grapple with their own understanding of the term. This chapter will take up this task, mapping out how amateur intellectuals and esteemed scholars alike have tackled and understood authenticity. First, I will consider the Occidente's extensive history of looting and falsification and outline how a lack of provenience allowed collectors to openly interpret the ancient ceramics according to their own subjective viewpoints. Next, I will argue for the value of museum

[59] Furst, "Shaft Tombs". Peter T. Furst's shamanic paradigm first began with his dissertation project in 1966, which compared the role of modern Huichol shamans to the ancient figurines of West Mexico. This theory still abounds within museum labels and articles devoted to West Mexico. Although his scholarship has been heavily critiqued, it continues to influence both academic work as well as museum texts.

collections, asserting that the ceramics within institutions cannot simply be shunned as inauthentic or fake. Finally, this chapter will contend with how different scholars have measured authenticity. Analyzing the main object of my study, I will argue for its authenticity while also considering the limitations of working with West Mexican models.

AN ABSENT ARCHEOLOGY

Even before the start of the Mexican Revolution in 1910, West Mexican figurines attracted hordes of looters and forgers. Working in the late 1800s, the English explorer Adela Breton was one of the first to study the art of the region. She documented objects in watercolor and also witnessed the systematic pillaging of archeological sites, as people destroyed ancient burials in hopes of finding figurines.[60] Ripped from their original contexts, these objects were sold to locals and foreigners alike on the art market.

Forgeries were also prevalent during this time. Leopoldo Batres published the first account dedicated to the subject in 1910. One of the illustrated artifacts is a small-scale "Jalisco" ceramic covered in various geometric designs (Fig. 12). His study signals that by the early 1900s, West Mexican figurines, both falsified and authentic, were populating the art market.[61]

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[60] Robert B. Pickering and Christopher S. Beekman, "Introduction: An Historical Overview of Shaft Tomb Archeology in Western Mexico," in *Shaft Tombs and Figures in West Mexican Society: A Reassessment*, ed. Robert Pickering and Christopher Beekman (Tulsa: Gilcrease Museum, 2016), 5.

[61] Ibid; It was not until the 1930s that West Mexican figurines began to appear in the artwork of modern artists such as Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, and Peter Furst speculates that Rivera's collection not only inspired artists but also accelerated the widespread destruction of West Mexican tombs. Thus, many conversations centered around the looting of these objects credit the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution

Budding in the shadow of this massive art market were the beginnings of an archeological project seeking to give the region's enigmatic ceramics some scientific context. The 1930s witnessed some of the first robust forays into the material and visual culture of ancient West Mexican societies, especially that of the Postclassic Tarascan state. Working around Lake Pátzcuaro in Michoacán, Alfonso Caso began excavating and reconstructing a massive temple platform from the site of Tzintzuntzan in 1937, and archeological projects within the area continued under the supervision of the newly founded National Institute of Anthropology and History in 1939. Scholars also began to extensively examine the *Relación de Michoacán*, one of the earliest surviving illustrated manuscripts from colonial Mexico. Commissioned by the Spanish viceroy around 1540, the document records the customs, dress, and laws of the Postclassic state. What is particularly striking about the document are the various illustrated acts of violence and subjugation. Overall, the region's monumental remains and colonial documents depicting conquest and tribute attest to a sophisticated level of social and political power. Although such a document post-dates the maquettes and ceramics of West Mexico by many centuries, it underscored the rich and complex history of this region of Mesoamerica.

Despite these beginnings, the study of West Mexican art and archeology continued to suffer from widespread looting. Without provenience, scholars struggled to date and interpret ceramics. So, although West Mexican objects flooded the art market and collections, there was no archeological data dictating what they represented or how

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with bringing West Mexico to more widespread attention. However, research shows that the region was already being exploited by forgers and looters during the Porfirian era, and at the time, collectors were already hoarding large quantities of West Mexican art.

they were used. And although Batres' study demonstrated that falsifications were taking place, very few collectors, whether individuals or teaching institutions, questioned the authenticity of their collections. A dearth of archeological data, yet steady surge of ceramic figurines left the region's art open to interpretation, and thousands transformed the ancient objects into modern statements.

AMATEURS, ARTISTS, AND THE AUTHENTIC

Informed by the ideals of the Mexican Revolution, some early 20th century artists and intellectuals favored the expressive art objects as representations of an egalitarian society. The revolution glorified Mexico's ancient civilizations, but unlike the previous Porfirian regime, connected the country's glorious past to its indigenous peoples. Within such a political climate, the art of West Mexico was considered the "products of an egalitarian society of ancient *campesinos* and…powerful antecedents to the vital and admirable traditions of Mexican popular art…"[62] Replete with images of communities and people performing seemingly quotidian tasks, the ancient art became a bridge between an old civilization and the ideals of a young nation seeking to reinvent itself.

To this day, it is impossible to discuss the historiography of West Mexican art without acknowledging Diego Rivera's impact. A great admirer of Pre-columbian art, Rivera constructed the Anahuacalli Museum, which displays over 2,000 items from the

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[62] Judy Sund, "Beyond the Grave: The Twentieth-Century Afterlife of West Mexican Burial Effigies," *The Art Bulletin* 82, no. 4 (December 2000): 744, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3051420.

artist's extensive holdings.[63] Colima, Nayarit, and Jalisco figurines dominate the display cases; hollow figurines carry vessels along their backs, and house models depict figures feasting beneath decorated roofs. Thousands more portray individuals distinguished by their jewelry, clothing, body markings, and posture.[64] Boasting about his collection, Rivera stated that Alfonoso Caso and his colleagues "were enthusiastic about my collection, declaring that… I had shown an uncanny instinct for what was authentic and important."[65] However, many contemporary scholars have questioned the authenticity of the collection. In 2008, Solís Olguín estimated that a significant portion of the objects are not antiques, but modern forgeries.[66]

Rivera's belief that his collection was composed of "authentic" objects reveal the ways in which studies of the past are wrapped in a contemporary politics of identity-making. Christina Bueno observes that antiquities often took on a "heightened ideological importance…and had become part of the cultural process inherent in nation building."[67] Thus, for Rivera and many other modern artists, their admiration of pre-Columbian artifacts was not purely about rediscovering an ancient culture, but producing a modern

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63 Margarita De Orellana, "Diego Rivera Museum," *Artes de México* 64/65 (1965): 34, http://www.jstor.org/stable/24312971; the Anahuacalli proved to be an ambitious and costly project, taking over twenty years to complete and finally opening to the public in 1964. Rivera's collection consists of over approximately 60,000 artifacts.

64 See Diego Rivera, "A Home for My Idols," in *My Art, My Life: An Autobiography* (New York: Dover Publications, 1991) for more about the Anahucalli and his collection.

65 Diego Rivera, *My Art, My Life: An Autobiography* (New York: Dover Publications, 1991), 156.

66 Nancy Deffebach, "Revitalizing the Past," in *María Izquierdo and Frida Kahlo: Challenging Visions in Modern Mexican Art* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), 71; Olguín states that the only way to quell these rumors are to date the objects using current technologies, such as thermoluminescence. It is unclear if the Anahuacalli has ever pursued such a project, as the website (unsurprisingly) makes no mention of the collection's questionable authenticity.

67 Christina Bueno, "Forjando Patrimonio: The Making of Archaeological Patrimony in Porfirian Mexico," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 90, no. 2 (2010): 216-219.

one. Nancy Deffebach notes that Frida Kahlo represented at least one pre-Columbian object in eight paintings, and that six of these works feature a West Mexican figurine.[68] She argues that Kahlo used these figures to "embody emotional states and…position herself within the history of indigenous Mexican art and to proclaim her authenticity."[69] Like Rivera, Rufino Tamayo also amassed a large collection of Pre-columbian objects. In his art, Colima dogs become ravenous, and wide-eyed figurines seem to come alive on the page. Each of these artists saw a certain level of authenticity within the art of the Occidente, transforming the objects from "quotes of an academically formed memory" into cultural expressions of a malleable past.[70]

One can glean such a concept from Rivera's mural at the National Palace titled *Tarascan Civilization* (Fig. 13). Completed in 1942, it shows imagined ancient West Mexican people at work within the lush environment of a lake basin. A group chops down trees, transforming the wood into the decorated houses and architecture that are mirrored within the maquettes. At the forefront, a man appears to supervise a group of laborers, and at the very bottom of the fresco, there is a strip of grisaille panels that show artisans at work. The central image of this grisaille panel (Fig. 14) illustrates a man and woman manufacturing the region's famous hollow ceramic figurines. In the background, the woman molds a lump of clay into an anthropomorphic vessel, and the foreground

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68 Nancy Deffebach, "Revitalizing the Past," in *María Izquierdo and Frida Kahlo: Challenging Visions in Modern Mexican Art* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), 69.

69 Deffebach, "Revitalizing the Past," 69-70; Deffebach uses the term authenticity as a way of becoming one's most desired self. So, she claims that "Kahlo utilized the figures from West Mexico to construct the image of herself that she wanted to project."

70 Eduardo Subirats, "Writing and Cities," in *Cruelty and Utopia: Cities and Landscapes of Latin America*, ed. Jean-François Lejeune (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005), 94.

features a man carving a female figurine. Beside him are a noticeable pair of West Mexican ceramics that are frequently seen within Rivera's collection: the Colima dog and burden carrier.

Overall, the mural references a variety of West Mexican societies, yet noticeably neglects any allusions to the Postclassic Tarascan state. At the time of the mural's creation, a faulty chronology labelled all West Mexican objects as 'Tarascan', placing them within the same era of the Aztecs, or between the 13th and 16th centuries.[71] However, the artist neglects any visual references to the actual Postclassic Tarascan state. Instead, he focuses on popular representations of ancient Colima, Jalisco, and Nayarit societies, creating an image that serves as a pastiche.[72] Such an oversight seems puzzling once one considers that some of the first controlled and scientific excavations into West Mexican civilizations took place in Michoacán.[73]

For artists like Rivera, West Mexican objects served as a tangible link between an indigenous past and present. In 1933, he published an essay which associated antiquity with a modern Mexican identity, stating, "It is indisputable that all art must have deep

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[71] As a result of the work being done in Michoacán, all of the ancient cultures within the West, whether they were earlier or later, were named after the Tarascan state.

[72] Sund, "Beyond the Grave," 746-77; Judy Sund makes the point that the mural "reflects Rivera's interests in Aztec sculpture and European abstraction" (746-47). She states that the figures bear more of a physical resemblance to Central Mexican and Maya peoples rather than the people represented in the region's ceramic figurines. Sund also notes that the homes and dress are distinctly Nayarit and that the grisaille panels feature Colima objects. I would also add that the landscape is reminiscent of the lake basins of Jalisco. Rivera's mixture of these cultures is understandable given the lack of archeological data at the time.

[73] Jolly, Jennifer. "Creating Historical Pátzcuaro." In *Creating Pátzcuaro, Creating Mexico Art: Tourism, and Nation Building under Lázaro Cárdenas*, 176-227. Austin: UT Press, 2018. In Pátzcuaro, artisans created murals depicting the Tarascan state. Jolly argues that these idealized frescoes, which were commissioned by Cárdenas during his presidency, offered the society as "an alternative to national narratives focused on the Aztecs" (193).

roots in the soil on which it is made, and that the only artistic production in this continent that has such roots is Amerindian *campesino* art…This tradition was never interrupted. It continued to live, especially in Mexico."[74] Thus, the artist may have viewed West Mexican art as "powerful antecedents to the vital and admirable traditions of popular art and folk art."[75]

West Mexican objects also garnered great attention outside of Mexico, as collectors within the United States accumulated entire collections devoted to the distinctive figurines. The objects were so popular that they were even featured in advertisements. The real estate developer Jules Berman loaned his ceramics to Kahlúa, a coffee-flavored Mexican liqueur company, for print ads from the mid-1960s until 1995. The company used them as "readymade mascots and played on their striking unfamiliarity to style the liqueur as exotic and its imbibers as adventurous."[76] Holger Cahill noted that the objects lacked "Aztec ferocity or the tropical luxuriance of the Maya," which gave them a "direct appeal to contemporary European and American taste."[77]

During the 1930s and 40s, amateur art historians and anthropologists also upheld this view of West Mexico as a non-hierarchical society of communal indigenous peoples. As they produced some of the first comprehensive texts dedicated to the region, these intellectuals set the tone for how West Mexico would be defined for years to come. In

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[74] Xavier Moyssén Echeverría and Diego Rivera, *Textos de Arte* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1986), 255.
[75] Sund, "Beyond the Grave," 744.
[76] Ibid, 735.
[77] Mark Cahill and Museum of Modern Art (New York, N.Y.), *Aztec, Incan and Mayan Art: Formerly Entitled American Sources of Modern Art* (New York, NY: Museum of Modern Art, W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1933), 14.

1941, Gilbert Médioni and Marie-Thérèse Pinto published *Art in Ancient Mexico*, a catalogue dedicated to the Pre-columbian collection of Diego Rivera. The former waxes poetic in the volume's introduction, asserting that their art is full of "unity…full of rather disturbing joviality…tender, never wicked humor…"[78] Similarly, Salvador Toscano frequently discussed West Mexican art and also partnered with Rivera in 1946 for a major exhibition devoted to the subject.[79] In *La Cerámica Tarasca*, he discussed their "brutal happiness" and "silent anguish," emphasizing the emotive quality of the ceramics.[80]

For years, West Mexican scholarship has been defined by work stemming from these amateur art historians and curators. Many Mesoamerican civilizations are known for their monumental architectural complexes and sculpture, which alter and integrate into the surrounding landscape. The subterranean shaft tombs of the West seemed unimposing and almost humble in comparison to the "ferocity" and "luxuriance" of Aztec and Maya art.[81] The art of the region appeared equally humble. The curator Fernando Gamboa once described it as a "domestic art," stating that they "represent people…There

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[78] Gilbert Médioni, "Introduction," in *Art in Ancient Mexico*, by Gilbert Médioni and Marie-Thérèse Pinto (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), X.

[79] Held at the Palacio de Bellas Artes, the show mainly consisted of Rivera's collection. Toscano produced an essay for the show's catalogue, repeating much of the same sentiments that he expressed in earlier publications.

[80] Garza Usabiaga, "Anthropology in the Journals Dyn and El Hijo Prodigo: A Comparative Analysis of Surrealist Inspiration," in *Surrealism in Latin America: Vivisimo Muerto*, ed. Dawn Ades, Rita Eder, and Graciela Speranza (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2012), 91.

[81] See footnote 75.

is not a single god there."[82] Collectors and intellectuals alike pointed to the objects' "genuinely human content which…has a universal appeal."[83]

West Mexico became known for its seeming lack of any overt, centralized political structures and instead a people devoted to egalitarianism. Even as scholars began to outline the West's trade networks with the rest of Mesoamerica and acknowledged cultural differences between artistic styles, some still separated the Occidente from the rest of Mesoamerica. Michael Coe expressed doubts about the area's sophistication, stating that "it would be stretching a term unduly to call the various cultures of western Mexico... 'civilized.'"[84]

Fortunately, within recent years, scientific and technological advances have allowed us to reckon with the authenticity of museum collections. From thermoluminescence to indexing manganese stains, scholars have used a variety of methods to reconfigure preconceived notions of what 'authentic' West Mexican ceramic figurines look like. However, these advances have also called into question stark definitions of authenticity. During Robert Pickering's interviews with contemporary art forgers within West Mexico, he noted that some of the artisans would purposefully break figurines retrieved from burials into two and then create two new figurines from the fragments.[85] These interviews problematize clear-cut definitions of authenticity, as one

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[82] Deffebach, "Revitalizing the Past," 73.
[83] Hasso Von Winning, *The Shaft Tomb Figures of West Mexico* (Los Angeles: Southwest Museum, 1974), XII.
[84] Michael D. Coe, *Mexico* (New York: Praeger, 1977), 109.
[85] Pickering, Personal Communication, 2017.

cannot help but question if these chimerical ceramics can be considered authentic. Authenticity may come in ratios, not absolute numbers, in West Mexico.

MUSEUMS AND AUTHENTICITY

Studies centered around West Mexican figurines have long been "more impressionistic than analytic," making it difficult to determine what is exactly 'authentic' when one discusses the artistic corpus.[86] As collectors, artists, and scholars began to interpret West Mexican art, their research began to reflect what one *expected* to see, rather than critically engaging with iconographic themes and the scarce, yet growing archeological data available. For example, while Peter Furst's ethnographic work is a cornerstone of West Mexican studies, his field work among the Huichol painted *all* figurines as shamanic symbols. According to Furst, warrior figures are spiritual guardians in addition to their role as worldly warriors.[87]

David Stuart notes that Furst's academic influence extended beyond West Mexico, as scholars studying the Olmec and Maya in the 1980s and 90s also began to analyze the artwork of these respective cultures in relation to shamanism.[88] Such a trend brought West Mexico into the fold of Mesoamerica, demonstrating that these ancient cultures were united through a common spiritual practice. However, it also influenced

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[86] Sund, "Beyond the Grave," 742.

[87] Furst, "Shaft Tombs," 242-303; Peter T. Furst, "Shamanic Symbolism, Transformation, and Deities in West Mexican Funerary Art," in *Ancient West Mexico: Art and Archaeology of the Unknown Past*, ed. Richard F. Townsend (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1998).

[88] David Stuart, Personal communication, 2018. For more, see Cecelia F. Klein et al., "The Role of Shamanism in Mesoamerican Art A Reassessment," *Current Anthropology* 43, no. 3 (June 2002), http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/339529.

some scholars to dismiss the region as run by simple chiefdoms. Rather than being seen as a unique and socio-politically complex cultural area, West Mexico was simply deemed egalitarian. To this day, museums continue to use the shamanism paradigm as a catch-all when presenting their collections.[89] Additionally, Furst's research resulted in a surge of 'shaman figures', as forgers replicated pieces that emphasized the 'caricaturesque' nature of the figurines.[90] These 'shamanic' falsified figures were then acquired by collectors who saw the works as 'authentic', or "untainted by Western intervention."[91]

Although institutions and art collectors knew that the art market was flooded with fakes, they neglected to turn a critical eye to their own collections. Jane MacLaren Walsh states that collectors "sought objects that appealed to their own taste and to their own concepts of fine workmanship and beauty…"[92] Thus, the authentic reflected the "dominant culture's concepts about the…nature of the presumed ancient makers."[93] And this idea of the authentic then shaped art museum collections, as institutions developed their entire pre-Columbian collections around a single donor's dubious holdings.

This is not to say that ceramic figurines and figures housed within museum collections do not hold value. Combined, these objects form an invaluable data set that cannot be so easily disregarded.[94] More than passive decorative forms, ceramics possess

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[89] See C. Danien, .Elin, "On the Dilemma of a Horn" Expedition Magazine 46.1 (2004): n. pag. Expedition Magazine. Penn Museum, 2004 Web. 25 Apr 2018 <http://www.penn.museum/sites/expedition/?p=8480>
[90] Karen Olsen Bruhns and Nancy L. Kelker, *Faking Ancient Mesoamerica* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2010), 151.
[91] Walsh,"What Is Real?," 2.
[92] Ibid, 1.
[93] Bruhns and Kelker, *Faking Ancient*, 16.
[94] Pickering and Beekman, *Shaft Tombs*, 110.

the ability to communicate ideologies and histories in clay. West Mexican figurines reference gender, class, and other indicators of social status that contemporary scholars cannot access through the archeological record alone.

Unfortunately, ceramic artifacts are easily and frequently falsified by modern day forgers, making the matter of authenticating them even more complex. A convenient and pliable resource, clay is much easier to work and obtain versus stone or metal. Additionally, the material is also "among the most difficult in the world to test."[95] While thermoluminescence can help calculate the age of a fired object, the method does not work on all clays.[96] Additionally, many forgers are well-versed in the craftsmanship of ancient ceramics. To make falsifications seem convincing, forgers will break their modern creations and piece them back together, scuff them to make them look weathered, and bury them in damp, acidic earth for months to give the object an aged appearance.[97] Mineral deposits or stains are recreated with the flick of a paintbrush, giving the work the final mark of patina.

Fortunately, archeologists have developed a set of reproducible methodologies by which to measure authenticity. Forgoing formal analyses of style, these scientific achievements have allowed scholars to venture into new analytical territory. Although an overwhelming majority of museum figurines lack provenience, these advancements aid in determining authenticity while also attempting to reconfigure the original contexts for

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[95] Bruhns and Kelker, *Faking Ancient*, 21.
[96] Ibid, 28-33. Thermoluminescence (TL) dating is widely used for dating ceramics. Kelker and Bruhns state that TL dating is "based on the fact that that most ceramic clays contain some radioactive impurities. When the clay is fired into a vessel." This method requires the removal of a small sample and can be fairly costly and time-consuming.
[97] Ibid.

some of the objects.[98] Recent research has provided great insight into West Mexican ceramics, as databases and indices chart the presence and process behind post-depositional changes, such as insect puparia and mineral deposits. These studies allow scholars to "look beyond individual museum collections and to begin testing hypotheses on large samples."[99]

Confronting issues of looting and faking, Robert Pickering and Cheryl Smallwood-Roberts have created an "authenticity quotient" for West Mexican objects. The anthropologists focus on post-depositional changes that arise within the warm, humid environment of the shaft tomb. This quotient allows the researcher to analyze a sample of objects based on a number of criteria in order to explore the variables represented on and by the figures. Such variables include investigating the morphology of mineral deposits and the presence of puparial remnants. Testing copious West Mexican ceramics from the Gilcrease Museum and other museum institutions, Pickering and Smallwood-Roberts have created a "standard of observation that is reproducible, consistent, and accurate."[100]

Pickering and Smallwood-Roberts' research demonstrates that there are chemical and morphological differences between modern and ancient mineral deposits that can be spotted with the eye. The presence of mineral deposits should alleviate some of the fears that scholars have about the authenticity of the object, as they are commonly found on ceramics within shaft tombs; out of a sample of 675 figures, only 6.2% lacked visible

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[98] Pickering and Beekman, *Shaft Tombs*, 146.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Pickering and Smallwood-Roberts, *West Mexico*, 54.

mineral stains.[101] The archeological markers form as "a result of manganese and/or iron-fixing bacterial action and that the morphology of the deposits is significant."[102] After examining a collection of West Mexican objects from the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, Pickering and Smallwood-Roberts concluded that genuine mineral deposits should exhibit some of the following qualities: irregular edges that tend toward dendrites, consistent and opaque black color, and no overlapping (Fig. 15).[103]

Puparial remnants (Fig. 16) are much harder to forge and a trusted marker of age. They are usually "less than 4mm in length, oval in shape, and with lines perpendicular to the length that represent puparial segments."[104] Pickering and Ephraim Cuevas found that these remnants belonged to necrophilous insects who thrived within the shaft tomb environment. Although bug casings are often swept away in the hopes of making an object more presentable to museum audiences, a study shows that many figures possess some marker or remnant of the casing; out of a sample of 275 objects from the Hudson Museum, 23.2% contained puparia casings only on the exterior, 7.3% possessed them on the interior, and 9% presented them on both the inside and out. With further research, these remnants "may shed light on the microenvironment of the tomb, season of use, and aspects of internment process."[105]

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101 Ibid, 55.
102 Ibid.
103 Robert B. Pickering, "Results of External and Internal Examinations of Shafts Tomb Figures," in *Shaft Tombs and Figures in West Mexican Society: A Reassessment*, ed. Robert Pickering and Christopher Beekman (Tulsa: Gilcrease Museum, 2016), 136. For more features, please see chapter.
104 Ibid.
105 Pickering and Smallwood-Roberts, *The Visual*, 56.

During the spring of 2017, I worked closely with Pickering to determine the authenticity of the object of my study. Consulting his and Smallwood-Roberts' research, I was able to whittle down my numerous options to a small subset. As both have worked closely with objects from the Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa, OK, I chose a tableau scene from the institution that has repeatedly been featured within scholarly papers, whether from a conservation or art historical standpoint. Based on the guidelines of the authenticity quotient, the small-scale maquette scene is considered genuine. This score indicates that the object possessed puparial remnants and mineral deposits, as well as root marks and dirt.[106] Both researchers have expressed their belief in the authenticity of the object, both through personal communications and published research materials.[107]

In addition, to Pickering and Smallwood-Roberts' research, I also consulted with the Associate Conservator of the Gilcrease Museum, Ann Boulton, about the authenticity of the chosen maquette. Before the opening of the Gilcrease Museum's exhibition, *West Mexico: Ritual and Identity*, Boulton ran several tests to authenticate some of the works chosen for the show. She made several forensic observations at the museum's lab, and brought some objects to Oxford Authentication for thermoluminescence (TL) testing and to Tulsa Gamma Ray for X-ray fluorescence (XRF) testing.[108]

Boulton's research adds nuance to my project, as her own parameters for understanding authenticity differ greatly from those of Pickering and Smallwood-

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[106] Pickering and Smallwood-Roberts, *The Visual*, 54-58.
[107] Ibid, 13, 49; Pickering, Personal Communication, 2018.
[108] Oxford Authentication is a company dedicated to authenticating ceramics, pottery, stoneware, and bronze since 1970. Founded in 1976, Tulsa Gamma performs non-destructive testing and heat-treating services.

Roberts. While the maquette met Pickering and Smallwood-Roberts' criteria for authenticity, Boulton asserted that the object appeared "very suspicious."[109] The conservator noted that the fired clay base is covered with a thick layer of red paint. Pointing to two visible drip marks beneath the base, Boulton speculated that the object's red layer is a modern restoration. She also noted that the tableau sports many repairs. She stated that a few pieces have been reattached and that there is fill smeared on the bottom of the base, indicating that it was broken and repaired. Boulton hypothesized that this repair resulted in the thick layer of red paint. Additionally, she found signs of repair in the roof.

The conservator performed additional tests on the object's paint layer. She sampled a layer of the red paint for Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR), a technique used to assess the mineralogical composition of ancient ceramics. She also found that the red layer was very easily dislodged with a swab. She also tested the white decorations of the figures, remarking that they are "applied over this friable red layer, however, the white is not friable."[110] For Boulton, this is "suspicious and indicates the white is not a fired slip but a paint applied in a modern insoluble binder."[111] She concludes that the surface is very "fresh," as it does not show the signs of erosion or weathering that one would expect from an object placed in a burial for thousands of

[109] Ann Boulton, "West Mexico Exhibit Gilcrease 2016" (unpublished raw data, University of Tulsa, Tulsa, OK, 2016), 10.
[110] Boulton, "West Mexico," 10.
[111] Ibid.

years. Boulton questions the authenticity of the maquette, stating that no conclusions can be gained from an object exhibiting such heavy repairs.[112]

Although Boulton seems to draw a strict divide between suspicious/authentic, I would suggest that her research actually illuminates how complicated it can be for scholars to determine what is authentic. On one hand, the Gilcrease conservator's observations seem to suggest that the maquette is inauthentic, something more modern than ancient. To her, one cannot draw cultural conclusions from the object. On the other hand, Pickering and Smallwood-Roberts have advocated for the object. Pickering and other West Mexican anthropologists have gone on to research the maquette in more depth, discussing how the work shows social interaction and exchange in the ancient past.

The maquette is not a unique case within the artistic corpus of West Mexican objects. In 2014, the Gilcrease Museum tested one of their most well-known Colima dog figures, which wears a unique human mask. Testing the object, the museum team discovered that the animal's entire face was a modern reconstruction. Cases like this abound throughout museum collections – the torso is authentic, but the limbs are fake, or the figures of a maquette are real, but their base may be modern. These instances confront and confound scholars, forcing them to reckon with what appears to be a sliding scale of authenticity.

My research on this particular West Mexican objects meets, by necessity, at the crossroads of Pickering and Smallwood's and Boulton's investigations. The maquette bears archeological markers that support its presence within the shaft tomb, such as

[112] Ann Boulton, Personal communication, 2018.

puparial remnants. I also hesitate to dismiss the tableau entirely due to the overpainting detected by Boulton. While the thick red layer and suspicious painted details may hinder in-depth analyses of dress, the bodies of the figures are likely authentic, and reveal, intact, the original actions and social relationships. Additionally, as we have learned from a history of shoddy connoisseurship, one cannot always determine authenticity simply based upon how an object should look. That said, I would be remiss to neglect that the tableau does exhibit many signs of paint restoration. Considering Boulton's work, my thesis will step back from an in-depth analysis of painted dress and body marking. Yet, I will continue to analyze the differences in dress present within the tableau in modeled form, as some figures sport regalia that has been formed with clay and others do not.

For some, 'authenticity' is a concrete term, meaning the object has little to no restoration and has largely been left alone since the day it emerged from its original archeological context; for these people, there is no negotiation. My thesis avoids such a narrow and reductive definition and instead explores the gray area in between extreme poles of "authentic" or "fake." Working with West Mexican objects requires scholars to understand and grapple with the artistic corpus' rich and troubled history of looting and falsification. As West Mexican societies consistently communicated through ceramics, these objects cannot simply be dismissed as inauthentic, and scholars must learn new methodologies that reconfigure how we approach the study of West Mexican figurines. As I demonstrate throughout this thesis, we are wise to adopt an analytical framework that recognizes – and is honest about the fact – that any single West Mexican object has, potentially, both "authentic" and "reconstructed" or "fake" attributes, each of which says

something powerful about the history of the object in the ancient past and the modern present.

People, Place, and Politics

The procession model, like most West Mexican maquettes, is unique in its attention to people and place. It hosts a number of ceramics actors, each engaged in their own activities while also subsumed into the collective narrative. Another major player within this scene also appears to be the built environment itself. The house stands as the final destination of the procession, and the footed tableau acts as an extended stage for the figures. The model signals the importance of space, as people, action, and architecture are fired into a single entity. The ceramic figures are rooted in place, incapable of being moved by the spectator. In fact, even though the model is a small-scale, portable object, it possesses the ability to transport the viewer. It explodes with vigor and intricacy, pulling spectators into the moment's dynamism.

However, models such as the procession tableau do not solely invite us into a figurative world, but one that is also impacted by the realities of the built environment. Scholars have continuously drawn parallels between the architectural models and the vestiges of architectural structures documented in the field.[113] Peter T. Furst proposed that the precedent for the Huichol's burial practices can be seen in Nayarit house models, which depict ceramic figures gathering above, in an architecturally-defined space, while deceased ancestors rest below (Fig. 17).[114] Excavations within central Jalisco support Furst's assertion, illustrating that aboveground homes were sometimes accompanied by

[113] Day, Pickering, and Butterwick, "Archaeological Interpretations," 153-156; Furst, "House of Darkness," 52-62; Butterwick, "Days of the Dead".
[114] Furst, "House of Darkness," 52-62.

underground burials.[115] Various archeologists have also investigated the circular patio spaces that dot the West Mexican landscape, using the ceramic works as tangible documents of these ancient architectural forms.

In this chapter, I delve into the procession model and other architectural tableaus, outlining how their manifestation of peopled space reflects the socio-political complexities of West Mexico. Solidifying interactions and ephemeral performance in clay, the objects invite the spectator to meditate upon moments of negotiation within the known spaces of the Occidente. Negotiations of political authority extend beyond simple dichotomies of elite versus commoner. Finds at Navajas show that these spaces were scattered with domestic wares, signaling that they may have functioned as communal feasting spaces.[116] Christopher Beekman's work within central Jalisco sheds light on the region's socio-political complexity, exploring "recent analyses that associate different types of formal built space in the Tequila valleys with conflicting political strategies…."[117] Drawing upon spatial evidence and archeological remains, he asserts that families cooperated and competed with one another for status and prestige, and that these bouts for power were enacted within architectural spaces that held symbolic weight. Knowing this, I propose that the maquettes' emphasis upon gathering alludes to this complex and never static political system.

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[115] Butterwick, "Days of the Dead," 142.

[116] Catherine Janette Johns, "Ceramic Activity Analysis of Navajas Circle 5 and the Need for Practice Theory in Unusual Monumental Architecture" (master's thesis, University of Colorado, 2014), 101-106.

[117] Christopher S. Beekman, "Conflicting Political Strategies in Late Formative to Early Classic Central Jalisco," in *Political Strategies in Pre-Columbian Mesoamerica*, ed. Sarah Kurnick and Joanne Baron (Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2016), 67.

PEOPLE

Considering its detail in form and fabrication, the procession model was most likely molded by a specialized artisan. While much attention has been given to West Mexico's figurines and models, little research has been devoted to the skilled ceramicists behind these objects. Meredith Aronson suggests that the high level of modeling displayed by hollow figurines alludes to the handiwork of trained, specialized makers for these type of intricate ceramics.[118] Scholars like Furst and Rebecca R. Stone have also testified to the presence of an artist's hand across multiple figurines.[119] Knowing this, some have also ventured that there were potential "schools" of figurine production, although such theories remain tenuous at best.[120]

Shaped with tempered clay, the procession maquette features a combination of slab construction and rolled fillets to hand model the figures.[121] The people and architecture were then vibrantly colored with slips of paint. Although tests have called the authenticity of the object's painted surface into question, the model's bright reds, yellows, and whites align with the ceramics often associated with the Ixtlán del Río, Nayarit style.[122] Once each element was placed upon the tableau, the model was then

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118 Aronson, "Technological Change," 67.

119 Furst, "Shaft Tombs," 36; Rebecca R. Stone, "Keeping the Souls Contained: Instantiation and the Artist's Hand in Ceramic Figures by the 'Mexpan Sculptor' of Southern Nayarit," in *Shaft Tombs and Figures in West Mexican Society: A Reassessment*, ed. Robert B. Pickering and Christopher S. Beekman (Tulsa, OK: Gilcrease Museum, 2016), 175-177.

120 Jackie Gallagher, *Companions of the Dead: Ceramic Tomb Sculpture from Ancient West Mexico* (Los Angeles: Museum of Cultural History, 1983), 106.

121 Day, Pickering, and Butterwick, "Archaeological Interpretations," 154.

122 Kristi Butterwick, *Heritage of Power: Ancient Sculpture from West Mexico* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004), 34; Robert Pickering and Cheryl Smallwood-Roberts, *West Mexico: Ritual and Identity* (Tulsa: Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art, 2016), 38-49.

fired at low temperatures. This particular model was given feet, giving it an air of presentation, as if it was meant to be placed and beheld.

At first glance, one may view the procession model as a cacophony of sensory stimuli. The singular tableau, measuring approximately 21h x 15w x 38d (cm), hosts over twenty small ceramic figures, seeming to burst at the seams with energy and action. Analyzing the tableau, Robert Pickering has broken the hoard of ceramic actors into different groups. The anthropologist does so by defining common posture, juxtaposition, direction, and then accoutrement.[123] Using Pickering's observations as a jumping off point, the spectator can break the polyvalent narrative into three main sections: the incoming procession, the receiving group, and the central duo performing the cheek-piercing ceremony.

Moving towards the ornamented house (Fig. 18), the approaching party dominates the tableau. At its tail end, two people are joined together by a rod that runs through their cheeks. The bundle visually commands our attention, hovering above the supporting figures and the two musicians placed before and behind it. This bundled enigma also sports what appear to be tufted feathers which mirror the roof comb of the house. Two women move alongside the bundle, and two figures transport folded textiles upon their head.[124] Situated at the front of the group, a woman carries a bowl possibly filled with food.

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[123] Pickering, Personal communication, 2018.

[124] Multiple scholars have attempted to understand how gender is represented within West Mexican figural art such as von Winning and Hammer, *Anecdotal Sculpture*; Kan, Nicholson, and Meighan, *Sculpture of Ancient*; Pirtle, "Practical Uses," Pickering and Smallwood-Roberts, *West Mexico*. It is generally accepted

Standing before (Fig. 19) and around the house are figures who appear both engaged and yet removed from the unfolding event. People perform the cheek piercing ceremony, balance plates of food or incense upon their heads, and musicians play instruments. Other figures do not directly engage with the procession. Peeking into the home, the viewer will notice a woman kneeling inside (Fig. 20), her back turned to the action. Outside, a figure sits with a stack of incense or food (Fig. 21). On the other side (Fig. 22), another relaxes, as woman kneels to their side, tending to a stack of items.

Breaking the narrative into pockets of action, Pickering noticed that the duo (Fig. 23) taking part in the cheek-piercing ceremony take center stage within the tableau. A lone figure carries the elongated pole while another helps to support its weight. Examining the moment, we are unsure if he too will take part in the ceremony, or if he is simply acting as an aid.

Much work remains in deciphering the model. The scene has often been interpreted as a mortuary procession for a deceased ancestor due to the presence of the wrapped bundle. Hasso von Winning has stated that the "cylindrical object denotes a catafalque or a false mummy bundle about to be laid in state," and the people who carry it are described as pallbearers.[125] Von Winning's observations have laid the groundwork for

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that loincloths, a flat torso, and male genitalia signify male figures, while skirts, modeled breasts, and hands on the stomach signify female.

[125] von Winning and Hammer, *Anecdotal Sculpture*, 25. David Stuart also points out that von Winning's funerary interpretation of the procession model aligns with a historiographical moment in Mesoamerican scholarship when Maya art was continuously labelled as funerary in nature. During this time, scholars continuously connected narratives upon Maya vases to that of the Underworld, failing to realize that these objects illustrated scenes of the living. Stuart ventures that this moment in scholarship, which arose during the late 1960s and lasted into the 1970s, may have influenced von Winning's analysis. If so, this certainly calls his funerary interpretation into question. David Stuart, Personal communication, 2018.

subsequent readings of the object, as scholars continue to understand the model as a set of funerary rites for the dead, with family members coming together to mourn.[126] Figures pierce their cheeks as a form of bloodletting, "using implements such as perforators…to offer their own…blood to the earth, the ancestors, and other deities."[127] In its entirety, the scene has been interpreted as one that depicts both mourning for and celebration of the dead, as people come together to offer food, textiles, and blood to the deceased.[128]

Many scholars have also examined details of clothing and body markings, noting that they are similar to the larger hollow figurines.[129] Although my analysis will not dig deeply into accoutrement, one cannot discuss West Mexican art without acknowledging the high level of attention given to attire. The elaborate adornment of West Mexican figures was used to signify individual status as well as group identification, and many of the figurines featured within the tableaus bear striking resemblances to their larger-scale kin. The hollow figures wear similar hats, jewelry, body paint, and even carry similar objects. Juxtaposing the two, scholars hypothesize that we may be able to understand the social status and identities of the smaller-scale figurines, a concept I will explore in the following chapter.

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[126] von Winning and Hammer, *Anecdotal Sculpture*, 25; Richard F. Townsend, "Ancient West Mexico," in *Indian Art of the Americas at the Art Institute of Chicago* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2016), 158-160; Butterwick, "Days of the Dead".

[127] Richard F. Townsend, "Before Gods, Before Kings," in *Ancient West Mexico: Art and Archaeology of the Unknown Past* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1998), 131.

[128] Ibid; Kristi Butterwick, "Food for the Dead: The West Mexican Art of Feasting," in Ancient West Mexico: Art and Archaeology of the Unknown Past, ed. Richard F. Townsend (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1998), 99-101; Pickering and Smallwood-Roberts, *West Mexico*, 27.

[129] Pickering and Smallwood-Roberts, *West Mexico*, 27; Pirtle, "Practical Uses"; Von Winning, *The Shaft*; Butterwick, "Days of the Dead."

The procession model is not singular in its rendering. The Gilcrease Museum houses another similar object (Fig. 24), which also illustrates a slew of figures moving a bundled object to a final house. People are scattered across the slab, performing similar rituals – they play conch shells and pierce their cheeks. We even see a similar set of characters lounging around the house. Due to the object's dark patina, it is harder to make out any elaboration of adornment, but the figures do appear to wear white bands of paint along their arms. While only two figures wear headgear, they all appear to sport the white band of paint, which may visually imply their shared status.[130] Von Winning and Hammer examined other comparable examples (Fig. 25) in their study of architectural models. Like the former examples, the scene also possesses people carrying a bundled object towards a structure. In all, these procession models appear to portray funerary rites, depicting mortuary bundles being moved towards a structure.

Some have also sought to relate the iconography of the tableaus to later ethnographic documents, such as the *Relación de Michoacán*. Butterwick juxtaposed the ancient funerary representations with passages from the *Relación* illustrating a set of funerary rites for a Tarascan king (Fig. 26). Although the 16th century document was commissioned to understand the life of the Tarascans, the record mostly focused on the legacy of the Uanacaze family, who ruled in Michoacán until the arrival of the Spanish. In the image, we see the deceased as a bundled corpse within a home, surrounded by family. We also witness the bundle being processed out of the home and adorned with

[130] See Kristi Butterwick, *Heritage of Power: Ancient Sculpture from West Mexico* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004), 50-51 and Pirtle, "Practical Uses" for a brief discussion of body paint and its indication of social status.

luxurious items, such as a blue pectoral, a plume of green feathers, and jaguar pelt quiver.[131] Finally, after being paraded and escorted by family members and attendants, the body is placed upon a pyre and burned. Butterwick draws parallels between the processions illustrated within the *Relación* and the funerary rites of the architectural models, focusing on their lavish depictions of people, offerings, and food.

Although the procession model and others like it are "emphatically representative of the living," analysis has often privileged the presence of the bundles and how the actions of the people honor the deceased.[132] Yet, observing the objects, one quickly notices how they repeatedly prioritize communal gathering and witnessing. In her 1995 study of ceramic house models, Butterwick surveyed more than 82 objects in public, private, or unidentified venues.[133] She found that "virtually none of the ceramic models has a single primary figure that alone is adorned," suggesting that the depiction of singular figures would convey individual authority or achievement.[134] Instead, she noticed that the figures repeatedly wear garments and jewelry that connects them with others, stating that "societal group membership, rather than individual identity, was the West Mexican artist's primary social message."[135]

Unfortunately, this emphasis on community has often been framed as evidence for the region's lack of a centralized structure of authority, especially in comparison to other

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131 Angélica Jimena Afanador-Pujol, *The Relación de Michoacán (1539-1541) and the Politics of Representation in Colonial Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), 167.
132 von Winning, *The Shaft*, 82.
133 Butterwick, "Days of the Dead," 134.
134 Butterwick, "Days of the Dead,"174.
135 Ibid, 168.

contemporary Mesoamerican sites and regions that focus on depictions of kings. For years, a debate has raged about the nature of the models. Hasso Von Winning presumed that they were anecdotal, remarking that the artistic corpus of the region lacked deities and temples.[136] Images of feasting, dancing, and burials were said to contain a "secular ceremonialism" because they do not offer clear-cut images of deities or other supernatural paraphernalia or forces.[137] Others corroborated Von Winning's sentiments that the tableaus were anecdotal, stating that the models depicted "ideal homes being shared by families" or a "refreshing glimpse of everyday life" for West Mexican peoples.[138]

Considering such sentiments, there is no wonder why the tableaus have continuously been viewed as mundane, or as providing little insight into the ancient communities beyond the quotidian. In a field that privileges the archeology and visual culture of states and empires, the tableaus, by contrast, were seemingly signifiers of a simple chiefdom.[139]

However, I would argue that the procession model's depiction of communal gathering forms a testimony about politics within the Occidente. Although the burial

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136 von Winning and Hammer, *Anecdotal Sculpture*, 21-29.
137 Ibid, 27.
138 Gillett Griffin, "America's Fugitive Figurines," in *Little People* (Denver: Denver Art Museum, 1990), 11,17.
139 Depending on who you ask, West Mexico can be classified as a state, chiefdom, or something else entirely. Such a project of classification goes beyond the scope of this thesis, but remains an important point of contention. Our inability to categorize West Mexico through tried-and-true descriptions of the state informs our inability to understand the visual culture of this region. See Beekman, "Conflicting Political"; Weigand, "The Evolution"; Lorenza López Mestas C. and Jorge Ramos de la Vega, "Some Interpretations of the Huitzilapa Shaft Tomb 273," *Ancient Mesoamerica* 17, no. 2 (Fall 2006): 271, http://www.jstor.org/stable/26309479.

bundle is certainly a crucial element within the scene, the actions of the living participants monopolize the tableau. Richard Townsend ventures that the models reflect rites of passage, capturing moments of great social change and transition, such as the passing of rulers or kin.[140] Butterwick's research corroborates Townsend's statement. Studying depictions of vessels and food within West Mexican ceramics, she contends that feasting was a "catalyst for significant, ritual, social, and political interchange" for the ancient societies.[141] Both Townsend and Butterwick confirm that the procession and its components – offerings of food, blood, and textiles – were relevant to social organization of the living. The figures within the procession model commune not only to honor the dead, but also to witness the "reconstituting of society after the ultimate dissolution of the body."[142] More than illustrations of an egalitarian society, the tableau presents communal actions that also served as social and political strategies in structuring the world of the living through "competitive intercommunity feasting and gift giving."[143]

Additionally, the presentation of the bundle also carries political and social implications. Julia Guernsey observes that the bundle relates a potent pan-Mesoamerican practice.[144] Various archeological and iconographic records reveal that architecture,

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[140] Richard F. Townsend, "Ancient West Mexico," in *Indian Art of the Americas at the Art Institute of Chicago* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2016), 158-160.
[141] Butterwick, "Food for the Dead," 89.
[142] Michael D. Coe, "Death and the Afterlife in Pre-Columbian America: Closing Remarks," in *Death and the Afterlife in Pre-Columbian America*, ed. Elizabeth P. Benson (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collections, Trustees for Harvard University, 1975), 193.
[143] William M. Ringle, "Pre-Classic Cityscapes: Ritual Politics among the Early Lowland Maya," in *Social Patterns in Pre-Classic Mesoamerica: A Symposium at Dumbarton Oaks, 9 and 10 October 1993*, ed. Rosemary A. Joyce and David C. Grove (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, c1999), 212.
[144] Julia Guernsey, Personal Communication, 2018

objects used in rituals, and the bones of the deceased were often wrapped. The act of bundling and unveiling the concealed article accentuated its sanctity, lending authority to those who held the power to exhibit it. Throughout Preclassic Mesoamerica, the practice was associated with rulership and ancestor worship, as successive lineages occasionally bore the bundle in performances, and the same ties that bound the deceased also bound future rulers to their office.[145] While we cannot be exactly certain that the bundled item is indeed a body, its very presence underscores the power of the incoming group, as they bear the right to handle such a sacred object.

Even more telling than these representations of social negotiation is the space in which these actions are grounded. The manifestation of place within the tableau can aid in our understanding of the model as a record of social organization and dynamics. Small-scale figures are frequently found deposited within graves without any association with architectural models. Some Colima models are radically different from the objects of this study (see Fig. 9). Without figures occupying their surface, the models offer a landscape that is only populated by architecture.[146]

There are also multiple examples of singular, unpeopled architectural models. Some of the few architectural models with provenience are solitary miniatures. At San

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[145] See Julia Guernsey and F. Kent Reilly, "Introduction," introduction to *Sacred Bundles: Ritual Acts of Wrapping and Binding in Mesoamerica* (Barnardsville, NC: Boundary End Archeology Research Center, 2006). Bundling also held associations with cosmological themes as a portal between cosmic realms, which "demonstrated access to cosmological structures and control of the forces holding the cosmos in balance, including that of time" (v).

[146] Curiously, many of these examples also function as containers capable of holding substance. These vessels point to the significance of the built environment, as if the present architecture lends potency to the imbibed substance. The scaling down of the environment also accentuates the authority of the person who owns it. Molded into a vessel, the architectural landscape is transformed into possession, as its handler has the ability to fill, empty, and move it.

Miguel Tonaya in Jalisco, Diego Delgado excavated a shaft tomb that contained a solitary house model.[147] Weigand also collected fragments of a ceramic architectural model during surface surveys at El Arenal, Jalisco.[148] Juxtaposing these examples with the procession model, the artisan's choice to anchor the people to place becomes telling. Within the scenes, people and place seem to act in concert; the bodies and their movement define the space, just as the space itself fosters communal gathering and action.

PLACE

Within Mesoamerica, open, public spaces were sites of interaction, negotiation, and contentious politics. They served as stages for social interaction among people, supporting the "political processes in which people create, negotiate, and subvert social realities."[149] Kenichiro Tsukamoto's and Takeshi Inomata's research considers the potency of public space, as plazas contributed to the "negotiation of power relations, community-making, and the constitution of political authorities."[150] In their own words, these sites acted as "critical arenas" that "allowed participants to witness the bodily presence of other community members and share common experiences."[151] These common experiences cultivated and strengthened group identities, as accessibility to and

147 von Winning, *The Shaft*, 11.
148 Day, Pickering, and Butterwick, "Archaeological Interpretations," 154-155.
149 Kenichiro Tsukamoto and Takeshi Inomata, "Gathering in an Open Space," introduction to *Mesoamerican Plazas: Arenas of Community and Power* (Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 2014), 5.
150 Ibid.
151 Ibid, 6.

the size of the space determined who was included within communal exercises and who was excluded.

The manipulation of open communal space played a crucial role in the urban and political development of many major Mesoamerican polities. During the course of its florescence, Teotihuacan experienced several reconstruction projects that changed the urban landscape of the city.[152] The presence of homogenous architectural elements, in the form of the *talud-tablero* architectural style, across Teotihuacan attempted to create a unified identity across multiple scales of the built environment, from domestic courtyards to larger plaza groups and even the grand Street of the Dead.[153] In this way, the built environment acted as material intermediary between a diverse cultural population and a centralized state authority, enhancing a sense of group identity.

In addition to the architecture itself, the iconographic programs within these spaces played key roles in negotiating power. Around 400 BCE, Building L-sub was constructed along the southwestern end of the Main Plaza at Monte Albán. Its iconographic program consisted of stone slabs decorated with contorted figures known as the *dazantes*, which have traditionally been interpreted as sacrificial victims. Recently, Urcid and Joyce have challenged such a notion, reframing them as "a series of human figures that constituted a sodality organized around age-grades."[154] The archeologists also

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[152] Tatsuya Murakami, "Social Identities, Power Relations, and Urban Transformations: Politics of Plaza Construction at Teotihuacan," introduction to *Mesoamerican Plazas: Arenas of Community and Power*, ed. Kenichiro Tsukamoto and Takeshi Inomata (Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 2014), 35.
[153] Ibid, 45-48.
[154] Javier Urcid and Arthur Joyce, "Early Transformations of Monte Albán's Main Plaza and Their Political Implications, 500 BC–AD 200," in *Mesoamerican Plazas: Arenas of Community and Power*, ed. Kenichiro Tsukamoto and Takeshi Inomata (Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 2014), 153.

note that while these figures dominate the narrative, there are also a few visual references to rulers. The iconography points to a curious tension between communal and exclusionary forms of representation, reflecting the socio-political dynamism of the site.[155]

Monuments within patio spaces also confronted and engaged those who gathered within these spaces. At the Preclassic site of Izapa, stelae and stone altars dotted plaza spaces bounded by platform mounds. These large-scale sculptural forms were encoded with visual messages that gave "tangible form to notions of Late Preclassic political authority, economic and ideological interchange, and social cohesion."[156] Together, Izapa Groups A and B were potent spaces devoted to ritual activity, and the iconography and arrangement of the sculpture populating the spaces reflected this. Stelae and altars transformed the spaces into cosmological centers of creation, bending time and rooting the power of rulers in both the past and present.[157]

Although they differ considerably in scale and elaboration from the aforementioned building projects, West Mexican societies also constructed public plaza spaces that once fostered social and political development within the region. Recent field work within the central valleys of Jalisco reveals that the area experienced a unique surge in cultural development and social stratification during the shift between the Late Preclassic and Early Classic, as clusters of major archeological sites developed around a system of lake basins. For these reasons, the area has often been considered the core of

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[155] Urcid and Joyce, "Early Transformations," 164-166.
[156] Guernsey, *Ritual and Power*, 2.
[157] Ibid, 140.

what has been termed the Teuchitlán culture or tradition, and its influence spread beyond the valleys to the surrounding states of Nayarit, Colima, Michoacan, and Zacatecas. Named after the site of Teuchitlán- Guachimontón in Jalisco, the Teuchitlán culture was defined by the presence of circular patio groups, known as *guachimontones,* as well as shaft tombs. Emerging during the Late Preclassic period (300 BCE-200 BCE), the distinctive circular architectural complexes were composed of "successive concentric circles—a circular altar, a wider circular patio, and a ring of equally spaced structures facing the patio" (see Fig. 7). The development of these circular platforms may have reflected a period of population growth, increasing cultural complexity and social inequality for the region.

The unique circular architecture and shaft tombs of West Mexico have continued to elude definite answers to questions about their symbolism and morphology. As they are rarely seen at other Mesoamerican sites, many scholars exclude West Mexico from the rest of Mesoamerica, stating that the region has more in common with the Andes.[158] Interestingly, at Cuilcuilco, in the central valley of Mexico, we see a comparative architectural form to the *guachimonton*.[159] In contrast to the traditional *talud-tablero* style dominating the central valley, the site's main pyramid spirals into a concentric circle and

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[158] See Dorothy Hosler, *The Sounds and Colors of Power: The Sacred Metallurgical Technology of Ancient West Mexico* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994) and Patricia Anawalt, "They Came to Trade Exquisite Things," in *Ancient West Mexico: Art and Archaeology of the Unknown Past*, ed. Richard F. Townsend (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1998).

[159] Created between 800-150 BCE, the structure underwent eight successive reconstructions. The edifice that we see today was constructed between 200 BCE and 200 CE, based on the majority of its construction fill. Based on the presence of West Mexican obsidian and similarities between pottery and figurine styles, scholars infer that there was some level of contact between West Mexico and Cuilcuilco. The extent of this contact and whether the site may have held influence over the West is unknown. For more, see David Carballo, *Urbanization and Religion in Ancient Central Mexico* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016).

has puzzled scholars for some time. There are also comparable circular structures during the Preclassic period in the Maya region, far to the southeast in the Petén.[160]

Believing that "the themes that were animated in the…circular mound complexes of West Mexico were…understood also by other cultures," scholars have fostered cross-cultural comparisons in order to understand the cultural significance of the *guachimontones*.[161] Examining the early cruciform layout of the *guachimontones*, Christopher L. Witmore ventures that the circular patios were cosmograms in which "peopled renewed their concept of time and space, their relations with gods and with each other."[162] He relates the layout of the space to that of the four cardinal directions, with the central pyramid acting as an axis mundi. Witmore deems the patio spaces as "sacred sun centers," drawing upon a persistent theme between architecture and cosmology that is seen across pre-Columbian cultures.[163]

Scholarship has generally accepted this idea, as many emphasize the cosmological aspect of the radiating circles. Framed in such manner, the patio symbolizes the earthly realm, the accompanying shaft tomb represents an underworld, and the central

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[160] Jaime J. Awe, Terry G. Powis, and James J. Aimers J. Aimers, "Preclassic Round Structures of the Upper Belize River Valley," *Latin American Antiquity* 11, no. 1 (March 2000) http://www.jstor.org/stable/1571671.

[161] Christopher L. Witmore, "Sacred Sun Centers," in *Ancient West Mexico: Art and Archaeology of the Unknown Past*, ed. Richard F. Townsend (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1998), 139.

[162] Witmore, "Sacred Sun Centers," 149

[163] Within Mesoamerican scholarship, architecture is often related to universal order and cosmology. Scholars attempt to analyze site plans and the layout of monuments with such a concept mind, relating sightlines and movement to east-west or north-south axes. Such notions have come under heavy scrutiny and critique within recent years. For more information regarding cosmograms and their role in Mesoamerican societies, please see Clemency Coggins, "The Shape of Time: Some Political Implications of a Four-Part Figure," *American Antiquity* 45, no. 4 (October/November 1980), http://www.jstor.org/stable/280144; Julia Guernsey, "A Consideration of the Quatrefoil Motif in Preclassic Mesoamerica," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 57/58 (Spring/Autumn 2010); and Michael E. Smith, "Did the Maya Build Architectural Cosmograms?," *Latin American Antiquity* 16, no. 2 (2005).

guachimonton acts as link to the heavens.[164] The layout and radiating plan of the circular patio has also been likened to representations of a form of maize.[165] Although many questions remain regarding their symbolism, the significance of the *guachimontones* is generally related to their mirroring of the surrounding sacred landscape.

As time and modernization have ravaged the remains of the *guachimontones,* the architectural models help to fill in the gaps left by archeological record. Just as other Mesoamerican societies used codices, texts, and stelae to record major cultural phenomena, ancient West Mexicans narrated their cultural experiences through diverse ceramics. The peopled architectural models allow us a glimpse into the society, allowing scholars to infer what the enigmatic circular complexes would have looked like in their heyday.

Even more importantly, these models offer various scaled views into the circular patios. Some depict the compound in its entirety (Fig. 27), illustrating the buildings and platforms that surround the central altar. Like the procession model, we are once again invited into a scene of extensive social interaction that is rooted within the openness of the patio space. In other models, this space is more abstracted, with few structures rimming the tableau and no central altar present (see Fig. 3). In the ceramic, a figure balances atop a central pole, performing the volador ritual or perhaps another pole ceremony. Below him, people congregate, and although they bear witness to the event, they also take in and interact with one another. More than static personages, the

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[164] See Furst, "House of Darkness"; Beekman, "Conflicting Political"; and Butterwick, "Days of the Dead" for examples of how West Mexican scholarship has interpreted the circular patio spaces.
[165] See Beekman, "Agricultural Pole" for more information.

characters turn their heads, hunch forward, and lean against one another like attentive spectators. Just as in the procession model, the animation of the figures signals that their interactions are key elements within this scene. House models (see Fig. 17) offer the most intimate view of the circular patio, as we zoom into one of the structures atop a platform. The people are seated with bowls, indicating that a feast is underway. The variation in size and dress of the people lets us know that people of different age, rank, and gender are present. Below, people are huddled within an open niche, which has been interpreted by Peter Furst as a shaft tomb below the platform. So, the bodies of ancestors quite literally form the foundation of the feasting scene. Taken together, these models offer varied glimpses into the circular patio spaces, allowing us glimpses into spaces that were once energized settings of communal gathering.

The scantly published archeological evidence that we have from Jalisco confirms some of the activity seen within the models, attesting to the circles' use as communal centers.[166] In her study of a *guachimonton* at the site of Navajas, Catherine Johns recovered a large assemblage of ceramic sherds that exhibited varying levels of use and design. Her study found that two types of vessels associated with domestic activity, Colorines and Arroyo Seco ware, dominated the patio. Based on their high frequency within the assemblage, Johns speculates that storage, cooking, and food preparation and

[166]Beekman, "Conflicting Political," 105; I intentionally use the word published here because, to quote Christopher Beekman, "it is becoming evident that the number of excavated tombs and figures is actually much greater than most realize. The problem in using them for research is not that there are too few excavations, but that excavators do publish in a usable format the combined information on the offerings, the skeletal data, and good illustrations and photos of particularly important artifacts such as figures."

serving occurred frequently within the structures of the patio group.[167] Beekman et al. also examined ceramic assemblages from the circles at Teuchitlán and found that Colorines vessels once again dominated a few of the patio spaces.[168]

Little evidence has been gleaned from sites in support of volador rituals taking place within the circles. Nonetheless, their depiction within architectural models indicates that other pole-climbing rituals may have occurred. Beekman's discovery of a shallow depression cut within the surface of a central altar at Llano Grande encourages such a notion.[169]

Recent research has also considered the morphology of the circular complexes, asserting that they are fairly open structures without high walls restricting access to and from the space. A lack of enclosed spaces or restricted pathways signal that the *guachimontones* may have been fairly easy to access.[170] Weigand also observed that the circular compounds possess an amphitheater-like effect, as they appear to have been "acoustically engineered to accommodate a larger audience than could be comfortably fitted into the actual circles."[171] Thus, the *guachimontones* functioned as stages which

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[167] Catherine Janette Johns, "Ceramic Activity Analysis of Navajas Circle 5 and the Need for Practice Theory in Unusual Monumental Architecture" (master's thesis, University of Colorado, 2014), 106.

[168] See Christopher S. Beekman and Catherine J. Johns, *Site Chronology*, ed. Christopher S. Beekman, Proyecto Arqueologico Teuchitlan, Informe de Laboratorio 2014 (n.p.: Proyecto Arqueologico Teuchitlan, 2014), 28-52.

[169] See Introduction, footnote 21.

[170] Kristie Hollon, "Analysis of Social Space: Analyzing Lived Experiences in the Los Guachimontones Central Ceremonial Area" (master's thesis, University of Colorado, 2015), 113; Although the space may have been fairly open, this does not mean the circles were not susceptible to restricted access. However, one can imagine how such open spaces, especially given the acoustics, would have added to competitive performances between circles.

[171] Phil C. Weigand, "The Architecture of the Teuchitlan Tradition of the Occidente of Mesoamerica," Ancient Mesoamerica 7, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 98, http://www.jstor.org/stable/26307283.

amplified and fostered communal gathering and activity, allowing for feasts, processions, and other large events.

However, communal is not synonymous with egalitarian, nor does it imply that communal spaces were free of conflict or competing interests. As previously outlined, throughout Mesoamerica, there is evidence that building projects around open, public spaces served as arenas in which power was negotiated. Within a community, there are multiple sources of power, which contribute to a network of social relationships. Eschewing a dual model that enframes the social activity of ancient West Mexican societies as communal versus exclusionary, we can begin to understand the complex political strategies that these communities employed.

POLITICS

Archeological evidence supports the idea that the circular compounds were also arenas for contentious politics. Beekman and Weigand found that if there was more than one circle at a single site, then one complex was always more elaborate or larger than the others.[172] Based on these observations, the size of the circles may have correlated with relative social, economic, and political authority, as "lineages within large architectural spaces command more labor or even the labor of multiple lineages."[173] Additionally, some of the more intricate structures, such as the eight platform *guachimontones*, were

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[172] Weigand and Beekman, "The Teuchitlan," 42.

[173] Christopher S. Beekman, "Corporate Power Strategies in the Late Formative to Early Classic Tequila Valleys of Central Jalisco," *Latin American Antiquity* 19, no. 4 (2008): 417, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25478242.; Hollon also makes the point that at sites such as Teuchitlán, the placement of circles may have impeded peoples' sightlines to other circles (190). She relates visual differences with vies for authority.

also accompanied by ballcourts. Both Weigand and Beatriz C. Braniff have suggested that the ball game was potentially used as a "diplomatic device," as "economic and political competitions, at various hierarchal levels, may have been played out on the ball courts."[174]

In addition to competition between different circles, evidence reveals that differences existed among the very groups based within a single patio group. Investigating circle fourteen at Navajas, Beekman recorded considerable variations among the structures ringing the compound. He found that they display "evidence of distinct sizes, construction methods and histories, and probably activities."[175] Some left material traces signaling their larger size and volume than other surrounding structures.[176] Anthony DeLuca's research regarding the architectural energetics of constructing circular patios and the platforms that ring them bolsters Beekman's finds. Analyzing the materials used to construct the platforms at Teuchitlán, DeLuca revealed that some structures used more accessible local materials, such as aggregate to build their platforms, versus others, which were made from clay imported from distant sources.[177] So, even as groups came together to create the patio space itself, they continued to create platform structures that were quite variable in terms of size and materials.

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[174] Day, Pickering, and Butterwick, "Archaeological Interpretations," 153.
[175] Beekman, "Corporate Power," 421.
[176] Beekman, "Corporate Power," 419-424.
[177] Anthony James DeLuca, "Architectural Energetics and the Construction of Circle 2, Los Guachimontones, Jalisco" (master's thesis, University of Colorado, 2017), 280-281.

Knowing this, the diversity displayed by the miniaturized structures atop the tableaus may reflect the diversity that the structures possessed in antiquity.[178] Hasso von Winning noted the intricate design of the clay roofs, comparing them to the modern structures of the Huichol.[179] Butterwick's study recorded numerous distinctive designs and shapes for the roofs of the buildings (Fig. 28), observing that although "the patterns incorporate a shared symbol set of vertical and horizontal lines, diamond shape lozenges, chevrons, and "god's eyes," no two combinations are completely alike."[180] Beekman ventures that this variety in form may carry social significance, as social groups decorated their structures in order to set themselves apart while also signaling their own shared identity.[181]

If these buildings were visually encoded with expressions of relative social power, then the presence of architecture within the models may also communicate similar themes. Such a proposition is difficult to substantiate, yet, looking at the house models (see Fig. 17), the actions of the people are consistently enframed by the architecture. More than backdrop, the edifice also stands as intermediary between the living and the dead. A group of people united beneath a single roof within a house model may indicate their shared social status or affiliation. Such a notion is also supported by the presence of the deceased below, who sits as the foundation for the feasting happening above.

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[178] Beekman, "Corporate Power," 423, 429.
[179] von Winning and Hammer, *Anecdotal Sculpture*, 21.
[180] Butterwick, "Days of the Dead," 148.
[181] Beekman, "Corporate Power," 423-424.

The presence of burials only adds to the social and political dynamism that may have played out within *guachimontones*. At Tabachines, excavators uncovered several tombs that were used for multiple internments, implying that they may have been used by a single lineage group over a period of time.[182] At Huitzilapa, an unlooted shaft tomb was discovered beneath the platform of a patio group (Fig. 29), revealing the remains of six individuals. Osteological analyses indicate that five of the six skeletons were inflicted with a congenital hereditary defect, revealing that the deceased were kin and that the tomb functioned as a crypt for members of a specific lineage.[183] Some shaft tombs also possess evidence of multiple burials events, signaling that lineages may have used them to create ties to place and accrue genealogical depth.[184]

As ongoing excavations uncover human remains, archeologists hope to perform more osteological analyses to confirm familial connections between those interred within burials. There is no denying that a high level of attention that was given to the remains of the deceased within West Mexico. Joseph Mountjoy's recent investigations within the Mascota Valley during the Middle Preclassic uncovered what he called a "cult of the dead". His analysis of skeletal remains at El Embocadero II and Los Tanques suggests "signs of exposure to the elements but these are limited, suggesting the use of a mortuary

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[182] Beekman, "Corporate Power,"418.

[183] Lorenza López Mestas C. and Jorge Ramos de la Vega, "Some Interpretations of the Huitzilapa Shaft Tomb 273," *Ancient Mesoamerica* 17, no. 2 (Fall 2006): 59, http://www.jstor.org/stable/26309479.

[184] María Teresa Cabrero García and Carlos López Cruz, "The Shaft Tombs of El Piñon, Bolaños Canyon, State of Jalisco, Mexico," *Ancient Mesoamerica* 18, no. 2 (Fall 2007): 249, http://www.jstor.org/stable/26309149; Pickering and Beekman, "Introduction: An Historical," 16; Lorenza López Mestas and Jorge Ramos de la Vega, "Datos preliminaries sobre el descubrimiento de una tumba de tiro en el sitio de Huitzilapa, Jalisco," *Ancient Mesoamérica* 7 (1996); Beekman, "Corporate Power," 429-431.

hut or charnel house serving as a place for storage, processing of the corpse and possibly social display."[185] Thus, the articulated and disarticulated remains within the burials may reflect family groups or "may represent the creation of a social symbol as part of an ancestor cult."[186]

Burials within public *guachimonton* spaces would have provided an interesting tension – on one hand, their location within these highly charged symbolic spaces may have served to aggrandize lineages, but on the other, the patio space itself promoted communal gathering and activity, likely involving more than immediate family members. Based on these observations, Beekman has rejected political models promoting West Mexican societies as states or chiefdoms. Instead, he argues that the region's societies utilized a corporate strategy, which "stresses inclusiveness and ideologies that promote community well-being through reference to cosmic values, though not necessarily by eschewing social hierarchy."[187] Rather than concentrating power within the hands of a single individual or lineage, corporate strategies were designed to ensure that power was shared across different sectors of society. Because no single lineage group could monopolize ties to the sacred, elite groups sought to aggrandize themselves through ancestral ritual while also linking themselves to the community to legitimize themselves as descent groups.[188] In this sense, the evidence from West Mexico compares to that presented by Urcid and Joyce, who have argued for similar tensions between corporate

[185] Jill A. Rhodes, Joseph B. Mountjoy, and Fabio G. Cupul-Magaña, "Understanding the Wrapped Bundle Burials of West Mexico: A Contextual Analysis of Middle Formative Mortuary Practices," *Ancient Mesoamerica* 27 (Fall 2016): 384.
[186] Rhodes, Mountjoy, and Cupul-Magaña, "Understanding the Wrapped," 385.
[187] Beekman, "Conflicting Political," 100-101.
[188] Ibid, 104.

strategies and more "exclusionary" forms of authority, even within a single construction program.[189]

Similar to the house model and pole-climbing model, I suggest that the procession tableau offers spectators a scaled view of the patio space. The maquette does not retain the circuitous form of the patio, but it does possess a roof-topped building whose design mirrors that of structures known to have lined the space. Although the patio has been abstracted, distilled down into only a fragment, the artisan has still chosen to situate the spectator within a space known for not only communal gathering, but socially charged performances. In eschewing the circular shape of the maquette, the artisan has chosen to emphasize the movement of the procession itself by stretching the scene, yet alludes to the essence of the patio in its manifestation of the decorated roof-topped structure.

As Douglass Bailey reminds us, absence is an intentional choice that "has important consequences for the understanding that the viewer develops about the miniature, abstracted object."[190] This visual compression scales down the built environment, but does not negate the power and meaning associated with it. Rather, this power is now made portable, and in its reduction, made intimate. Within West Mexico, circular patios were critical arenas, and places of commune and competition. Made manifest in clay, I venture that the representation of the patio – even in this short-hand way – retains its power, meaning, and legibility, even in miniaturized form.

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[189] Urcid and Joyce, "Early Transformations," 164-166.
[190] Bailey, "The Anti-Rhetorical," 118.

Figuring Out the World

Given the reduction and abstraction of space, the presence of the house speaks to the importance of place within the model. As previously discussed, the structures rimming the circular patio were sponsored by different social groups. Through their elaboration, the edifices announced the relative sociopolitical status of their respective social group or lineage. Just as the house's construction would have visually expressed power and identity in antiquity, so too does the ceramic house convey social messaging through its decoration within the tableau. Positioned as the final destination of the incoming procession, the structure occupies a significant role within the unfurling narrative.

Scaling down the patio space, the maquette distills the vitality of the setting into a compact form. Elongated and legged, the maquette appears to act as a stage for the figurines, as the object is presenting itself and its constituents, privileging the gaze of the spectator. Thus, in its rendering of space, the procession model quite literally and figuratively presents itself as a stage for the actions of the figurines. Given a panoptic view, the viewer is able to take in the scene in its entirety. If the human body acts as the measure of all things, then the miniaturization of the procession empowers those who handle it. It gives them possession over the portrayed space and people, as if they could figuratively claim both. The model's reduction of potent architecture and performance

"helps transfer the ineffable, desirable or timeless meanings into something more tractable."[191]

However, while the scale and figuration of the maquette empowers people, it also possesses an agency of its own. Witnessing the communal scene, those who handle the tableau are not simply visually consuming it; the scene itself dictates what they will see. In their arrangement and interactions, the anchored figurines maintain the ability to "stimulate the viewer to act, to draw inferences, to bring the small thing into his or her personal space, to enter into alternative worlds."[192] In the last chapter, I explored how the procession model's attention to space reflected the socio-political complexity of West Mexican societies. In this chapter, I turn my attention to the figurines themselves, exploring how their rendering may offer insight into how the maquettes functioned.

Some scholars studying West Mexican figurines have questioned whether the small-scale emulations of the body acted as portraits or material manifestations of social identities.[193] Such a question has also continuously been raised within Mesoamerican scholarship.[194] Small-scale figurines were repeatedly given standardized facial features, yet their ornamentation also spoke to a level of individualization. Through their

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[191] George F. Lau, "South America - Andes," in *The Oxford Handbook of Prehistoric Figurines*, by Timothy Insoll (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2017), 409.
[192] Bailey, *Prehistoric Figurines*, 67.
[193] Norwood, "Ancestors in Clay"; Pirtle, "Practical Uses"; Robert B. Pickering and Maria Teresa Cabrero, "Mortuary Practices," in *Ancient West Mexico: Art and Archaeology of the Unknown Past*, ed. Richard F. Townsend (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1998), 82-87; Rebecca R. Stone, "Keeping the Souls Contained: Instantiation and the Artist's Hand in Ceramic Figures by the 'Mexpan Sculptor' of Southern Nayarit," in *Shaft Tombs and Figures in West Mexican Society: A Reassessment*, ed. Robert B. Pickering and Christopher S. Beekman (Tulsa, OK: Gilcrease Museum, 2016), 178; Christopher S. Beekman, "Who Did the Western Mexican Figures Portray? The Correlation between Figures and Their Contexts," in *Shaft Tombs and Figures in West Mexican Society: A Reassessment*, ed. Robert Pickering and Christopher Beekman (Tulsa: Gilcrease Museum, 2016).
[194] Marcus, *Women's Ritual*; Joyce, "Making Something"; Guernsey, *Sculpture and Social*, 135-141.

presentation, figurines maintained the ability to influence one's own social presentation, underscoring that the production of material social skins also played a polyvalent role in the production of social roles.

In its focus on *peopled* space, I speculate that the procession model may have also performed a similar function. In its specificity and abstraction, the tableau may have served multiple roles. In this chapter, I argue that the tableau may present the spectator with a snapshot of a particular moment in time, while also depicting more generalized representations of social roles. The architectural setting serves to enframe the figurines' actions, giving the work a sense of specificity and contextualizing their behavior within an identifiable and familiar space. However, in its scaled down representation, the tableau does not offer the viewer an exact likeness of figurines (or even the space itself). Instead, we are presented with detailed depictions of attire and adornment, which speaks to the social status of the ceramic actors. As a whole, the procession model's consideration of people, place, and performance demonstrates the society's concern with sustaining social forces and behavior.

PORTRAITURE OR SOCIAL ROLES?

As I discussed in "Authenticity and West Mexico," the paint of the maquette has been called into question. However, observing the larger hollow figures, which also display careful attention to dress, one can imagine that the same careful consideration was given to the painted accoutrement of the figurines. Many larger, hollow figures display painted surfaces that simulate patterned textiles and don headgear and other forms

of adornment (Fig. 30). At 65cm tall and 26cm wide, the figure illustrated in Figure 30 presents a larger bodily canvas for ornamentation. He bears wavy vertical lines along his chest, implying that he is wearing a shirt or tunic, and he holds a fan. He also dons a white loincloth with a "scoop" and a stack of bracelets around his upper arm. The figure also wears multiple earrings, a nose piercing, and a head band, in addition to face paint. Another pair of figures (Fig. 31 & 32) displays additional attention to apparel. Their surfaces have been enhanced with paint, but their molded adornment retains their authenticity.[195] The female figure wears a cap and the same arm bands seen in the previous figure. She also wears large earrings and a nose ring. The male figure also sports elaborate headgear, earrings, and a nose ring with armbands.[196]

Some of the aforementioned ornamentation can also be seen in the small-scale figurines of the procession model (see Fig. 23). A few of characters wear loincloths and headgear, and some even carry similar items, such as the figurines raising fans before and behind the bundled object. Unfortunately, suspicions around the tableau's painted surface limits a deeper analysis of accoutrement. While one could argue that the similarities speak to standard representational practices shared between figures regardless of size, one is also left to wonder if such "standard representational practices" are those of the ancient past or modern forgers. Such questions are difficult to answer given the evidence. The correlations between the ornamentation of the small figurines within the maquettes and that of the larger hollow figures is provocative and underscores that attire was a key

[195] Boulton, "West Mexico,"10.
[196] According to Ann Boulton's observations, the items that they hold may not be authentic, so I refrain from mentioning them.

factor seen across scale. Yet, some of these details are also susceptible to suspicion, and I approach them with caution.

As miniaturization comes with intentional selections of inclusion and exclusion, the artisan's choice to preserve ornamentation in the smaller figurines speaks to its importance. Jennifer Pirtle's analysis of 154 Ixtlán del Rio hollow figures and miniature figurines revealed that "no matter how small or large the Ixtlán del Rio figures may be, they exhibit a similar set of attributes."[197] In her survey, she considered elements of dress, such as head coverings, ear and nose ornamentations, and limb adornments. Her findings reveal a complexity, as she notes that certain articles of jewelry point to differences in gender.[198] Additionally, while the ceramics exhibited a standardization in dress, some displayed elaborate mixtures of clothing and adornment that distinguished them from other figures. Opposing the notion that the objects were "carelessly modeled," Pirtle's research emphasizes the significance of dress across the scaled corpus of West Mexican figures.[199]

Such variability in dress touches upon an important question that is continuously debated among scholars – do the distinctive figurines of West Mexico act as portraits? As Rebecca Stone notes, just as some skeletons are discovered wearing shell bead necklaces and arm bands, so too do some of figurines sport painted white dots around their necks or concentric coils around their arms.[200] Evidence such as this certainly speaks to patterns of

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[197] Pirtle, "Practical Uses," 156.
[198] Ibid,150.
[199] von Winning and Hammer, *Anecdotal Sculpture*, 24-26.
[200] Stone, "Keeping the Souls," 178.

continuity between the painted adornment of the ceramic figures and the archaeological record, which any forger would likely be unaware of. Pickering and Cabrero have also hypothesized a possible connection between ballplayer figurines and their placement within the burials of deceased individuals who sustained injuries that might be attributed to playing the ballgame.[201]

Other scholars suggest that the objects may not directly correspond to the deceased with whom they are entombed. At the end of her survey, Pirtle suggests that "the figures may be representations of real people within the Ixtlan del Rio culture or at least of a socially constructed ideal of a person."[202] Understanding the "physical body as raw material to be worked into socially interpretable shape," she contends that the embellishment of the small-scale sculptural forms signify their status or membership to a social group.[203] Beekman's research has also supported the idea that they do not represent unique portraits of individuals, but broader social roles. Examining figures recovered from approximately 60 shaft tombs and pit burials within central Jalisco, Beekman found that figures with adornment suggesting high-status are six times more likely to be found within burials beneath architecture.[204] Second, the archeologist also states that "the figures resemble the occupants of the tomb in that they show more signs of status as the tombs get larger or are associated with surface constructions."[205]

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[201] Cabrero García and López Cruz, "The Shaft," 82-87.
[202] Pirtle, "Practical Uses,"152.
[203] Marcus, *Women's Ritual*, 155.
[204] Beekman, "Who Did the Western," 101.
[205] Ibid, 105.

Lauren Norwood's study of Lagunillas, Nayarit figures (Fig. 33) provides a nuanced perspective and takes up space between the two camps. She speculates that the objects are indeed a type of portraiture and challenges the assumption that the term resolutely refers to highly individualized representations. Instead, she asserts that portraiture "communicates the identity of the sitter to the intended audience, [relying] on the representation of a set of features that already occupied a place in the memory of the beholder."[206] Knowing this, Norwood argues that the Lagunillas figures may have acted as generalized anthropomorphic portraits, which "relies heavily on the meaning behind the marks on the objects, and the knowledge of the viewer."[207] Unlike Maya or Olmec forms of portraiture, which set individuals apart by illustrating stylized faces, the Lagunillas figures chiefly express identity through the display of body paint, jewelry, and other forms of adornment.[208] Thus, the figures may represent the deceased, but their emphasis on social markings communicate that the articulation of one's social identity through embellishment surpassed the importance of capturing specific facial characteristics.

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[206] Norwood, "Ancestors in Clay," 198, quoted from Kaylee Rae Spencer, "Framing the Potrait: Towards an Understanding of Elite Late Classic Maya Representation at Palenque, Mexico." (PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2007), 15.

[207] Norwood, "Ancestors in Clay," 202.

[208] For more on portraiture in Mesoamerica, see Elizabeth P. Benson, "Varieties of Precolumbian Portraiture," in *Retratos: 2,000 Years of Latin American Portraits*, by Miguel A. Bretos, Carolyn Kinder Carr, and Marion Oettinger, Jr., (San Antonio, TX: San Antonio Museum of Art, 2004).

SOCIAL SKINS AND SOCIAL ROLES

Archeologists have long understood and theorized the role of bodies as sites of knowledge, cultural expression, and lived experience.[209] Terence S. Turner's concept of the "social skin" has been crucial to scholars' understanding of corporeal adornment and embodiment. Described as the "common frontier of society, the social self, and the psychobiological individual," the social skin acts as a stage upon which one performs their internal identity as well as their external socialized self.[210] This presentation of the body, through forms of adornment or bodily modification, connects one to a larger society, tying an individual to other socialized beings. And, to quote David Stuart and Stephen Houston, "shared images of the body permit our very existence as social beings" by letting people know that they coexist with "fellow subjects that are equally capable of thought and activity."[211] Thus, performances of social skin aid in structuring the world itself, as people encounter others and learn to "synchronize our experiences and actions with those of other bodies."[212]

In their representations of bodies, clay figurines played a critical role in shaping understandings of the social self and how ornamented bodies serve as external signifiers of status and identity. For example, Rosemary Joyce's investigations into the Middle Preclassic figurines of Playa de los Muertos, Honduras assert that the objects may have

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[209] Terence S. Turner, "The Social Skin," in *Not work alone: A cross-cultural view of activities superfluous to survival*, ed. Jeremy Cherfas and Roger Lewin (London: Temple Smith, 1980), reprinted in *Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 2, no. 2 (2012): 486-504; Meskell, "The Archeology," Rosemary Joyce, "Archaeology of the Body," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34 (June 14, 2005).
[210] Turner, "The Social," in *Journal of Ethnographic Theory,* 486.
[211] David Stuart, Stephen Houston, and Karl Taube, "Preamble," in *The Memory of Bones* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), 5.
[212] Ibid.

served as idealized bodily templates for young women. Joyce charted the bodily traits of these figurines, grouping together characteristics like hair treatment and body ornamentations. Her results found that the bodies were "selective and stereotyped" and paid little attention to the specifics of gender. Instead, the individualized adornment of these small-scale ceramics seems to underscore transitions in age of primarily female subjects.[213] Paralleling the adornment of the Playa de los Muertos figurines with the skeletal adornment witnessed in burials, Joyce claims that the small-scale ceramics may be interpreted as "objectifications of turning points in the formation of social personae."[214] Through their individualized ornamentation, the objects provided their handlers with a bodily precedent to emulate, guiding them in their embodiment of social roles.

Like Rosemary Joyce, Joyce Marcus' influential study of Early Preclassic figurines from Oaxaca also notes an interesting tension between standardized bodies and individualized embellishment. Although the faces of these ceramics were given little attention, they displayed considerable variation in dress, posture, and hairstyle. Observing these differences, the archeologist ventures that the objects were not meant to capture the exact likeness of embodied ancestors, but to visualize certain aspects of their identity.[215] Focusing on details of age, marital status, and social rank, the women who crafted the figurines were able to conjure particular ancestors and interact with them through their material representations. In their rendering of the social skin, the objects once again

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[213] Joyce, "Making Something," 254.
[214] Ibid, 257.
[215] Marcus, *Women's Ritual*, 4-5.

support the notion that social role was given greater emphasis than the individual themselves.

Analyzing the procession model, I suggest that the solid figurines may also exemplify an interesting tension between standardized representation and individualized adornment. In their miniaturization, the identity of the ceramic actors is distilled down to their painted surfaces and adorned bodies. Like the Playa de los Muertos figurines, the bodies are "selective" and "stereotyped," giving the scene a level of bodily uniformity. The clay personae can also be grouped together based on their accoutrement. For example, many of the figures marching towards the final destination of the house wear simple headbands. In contrast, the group waiting to greet this incoming procession dons headbands with a single additional band running from the front to the back of the head.

However, just as these adornments can be used to group the figures together, so too can they offer the spectator glimpses into the individualized social roles of these ceramic actors. Just as the larger-scale hollow figures hold vessels, fans, and other personal articles echoing their individual status, so too do the small-scale figurines. In displaying variety in dress and behavior, the tableau "affords us an artist's perspective on the heritage of power in ancient West Mexican societies."[216] To contemporary viewers, the ceramic actors can appear "stylistically similar, carelessly modeled," but the object exhibits the artisan's careful consideration of attire.[217] While the bodies themselves have not been painstakingly shaped, the artisan did give time to mold the headgear of the

[216] Butterwick, *Heritage of Power*, 31.
[217] von Winning and Hammer, *Anecdotal Sculpture*, 24-26.

participants, creating diversity among them. Housing over 20 figurines, the tableau exhibits a scene of social performance, presentation and status.

What sets the procession model, and other West Mexican architectural models in general, apart from other figural scenes is the representation of place in addition to people. From Mezcala temple models to the stone house effigies of Copan, ancient artisans crafted architectural models across the geographic and temporal landscape of Mesoamerica.[218] However, there are very few *peopled* architectural models. A Teotihuacán style incensario (Fig. 34) from the Princeton University Art Museum is a rare example. Observing the model, we see not only a peopled space, but an interior scene as well. Another curious example (Fig. 35) hails from the Maya site of El Ujuxte along the Guatemalan Pacific Coast. Discussing the innovation witnessed among Preclassic sculptural forms, Michael Love highlights a curious ceramic disk that once hosted a scene comprised of four figures. Created during the Late Preclassic, the piece displays the ghostly imprints of two standing and two kneeling figures. Love states that the traces "suggest a dynamic composition similar to the representations of vassals and/or captives kneeling before lords, known from stone stelae, such as Kaminaljuyu Stelae 2, 6, 10, and 66; Kaminaljuyu Monument 165."[219] Love's observation underscores that dynamic scenes of social interaction were not only reserved for stone monuments. Although excavators have yet to uncover other ceramic compositions like the El Ujuxte

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[218] See Pillsbury et al., *Design for Eternity* for more examples of architectural models.

[219] Michael W. Love, "Thinking Outside the Plaza: Varieties of Preclassic Sculpture in Pacific Guatemala and Their Political Significance," in *The Place of Stone Monuments: Context, Use, and Meaning in Mesoamerica's Preclassic Transition*, ed. Julia Guernsey, Barbara Arroyo, and John E. Clark (Washington, D.C: Dumbarton Oaks, 2010), 155.

disk, its existence points to the creativity of ancient Mesoamerican sculptors. In their desire to structure and narrate social roles, these artisans looked beyond stone and also crafted fixed ceramic scenes.

Like the El Ujuxte disk, the procession model fixes its figurines in place, cementing their social relationships in clay. They are not individual scenes, but exhibit social interactions that seek to affirm the hierarchy or position of those present. If "shared images of the body permit our very existence as social beings," then the objects' emphasis upon peopled space underscores the capacity of place to foster social organization.[220] In their interaction with the lords, the vassals are physically forced into the social skin of prisoner, kneeling before the standing pair. The interactions among the procession model also bear similar results.

SOCIALIZED BODIES, POLITICIZED SPACES

As previously discussed, the public circular patios of West Mexico acted as venues in which social status was negotiated and displayed. Their role as communal settings, like other public spaces in Mesoamerica, likely served as arenas for the management of conflicting or competing interests. Their relatively large spaces would have accommodated grand performances while also giving community members the opportunity to witness and experience the socialized body. These suggestions are borne out not only by evidence in the form of the maquettes, but by recent archeological investigations, as I discussed previously. Excavations at Navajas support the occurrence

[220] See footnote 208.

of feasts within the patio spaces, just as we see in the architectural models. Johns' research at the site uncovered a high percentage of domestic ware within one of the *guachimontones*, signaling that the vessels were probably used for communal feasting events.[221] Yet, alongside these vessels, she also found a small percentage of fine pottery that was most likely "used for specific rituals, possibly rituals that involved individual aggrandizement."[222] Such finds indicate that there was indeed social stratification within a single patio space and that status was expressed through various means of material culture. Utilizing a political system that did not allow for a singular lineage group to claim power, West Mexican elites "may have been forced to link themselves to the community in some way to fully legitimize themselves as descent groups."[223] Through feasting, pole-climbing, and mortuary events, high-status social groups may have been able to negotiate their social status within their respective communities.

Thus, depictions of these events in conjunction with the built environment may have served to reify a lineage's social standing as well as their connection to a potent communal setting. More than anecdotal sculptural forms, the architectural tableaus allude to the socio-political dynamism of the Occidente, as they solidify these ephemeral social interactions and events. The presence of place contextualizes the social skin and actions of the figurines, reinforcing their role as social actors by enframing them within a space known for its socio-political dynamism.

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[221] Johns, "Ceramic Activity," 106.
[222] Ibid.
[223] Beekman, "Conflicting Political," 104.

Following Pickering's observations about sightlines, accoutrement, and directions opens the door to a few hypotheses about the personages represented within the tableau. First, the figures may all represent a single familial line or social group, and the differences that we observe between them may represent internal social stratification. Based on this interpretation, the people may be coming together to bury the dead within the home in "an attempt to maintain the identity and coherence of the household and lineage…"[224] In their presentation of textiles and foods, the figures are indulging in a practice that "would have displayed, to members of allied houses, the wealth of the house and its members and their confidence in their ability to replace the goods consigned to the earth."[225] Grouped within the patio space and before the house, spectators may be offered a bird's-eye view of a social group coming together to reaffirm their kinship to one another through feasting and bloodletting.

In another interpretation, the viewer may be witnessing different social groups uniting within one scene. As a circular patio could contain various factions within it, such a proposal holds some weight, although it may be difficult to substantiate. More than static spaces, the patio hosted numerous people, housing their communal interactions and competitive performances. Because no one social group could claim the space of the *guachimonton* as their own, each would have to put on public performances or events that connected them to the community at large, while also underscoring their own

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[224] Michael W. Love, "Early States in the Southern Maya Region," in *Early Maya States*, ed. Loa P. Traxler and Robert J. Sharer (Philadelphia: University Museum, N.d.).
[225] Rosemary A. Joyce, "Social Dimensions of Pre-Classic Burials," in *Social Patterns in Pre-Classic Mesoamerica: A Symposium at Dumbarton Oaks, 9 and 10 October 1993*, ed. Rosemary A. Joyce and David C. Grove (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, c1999), 41.

prominence. The lavish procession for the deceased would have certainly communicated a social group's wealth and status among other competing factions. As the structures ringing the circle have eroded with time, it is difficult to reconstruct how these various groups would have interacted within the space. The model may be offering us some insight into this interaction, as there is a visually distinct divide between those who receive the incoming procession and those who participate within it. The aforementioned distinction in dress and accoutrement may also hint at the presence of more than one social group within the scene. If such is the case, the continuous emphasis upon offering – whether blood, textile, or food – may be interpreted as a communal moment between the social groups that nevertheless involved offerings and social negotiation. If we can understand this scene as one of negotiation, then the artisan's decision to anchor this act of exchange or offering to the specific, architecturally-defined place of the circular plaza suggests, like the extant archaeological evidence, that these architectural spaces functioned as critical arenas for social engagement.

The widespread looting of West Mexican figurines has inhibited scholars' ability to read the visual narratives presented by these models. Very few examples have been found in-situ, and due to their poor documentation, academics still grapple with how these enigmatic objects would have functioned. For years, academics believed that the ceramic corpus of the region was "apparently made exclusively to deposit in underground

burial chambers."[226] Thus, the models have often been understood as purely funerary in nature.

Within recent years, however, excavations and surface analyses have steadily problematized such a notion. Beekman reports that horizontal excavations at Navajas uncovered approximately fifteen hollow figure fragments from two *guachimontones*.[227] Weigand also made similar finds at Teuchitlán.[228] As recent investigations locate hollow figures and solid figurines outside of the tomb, we must revisit the role of these ceramics as funerary art. Additionally, anthropologists have also begun to examine patterns of usewear. Pickering's research has recently taken up this task. Testing multiple ceramic vessels, figures, and miniatures from museum collections, Pickering has found that a number of these objects display evidence of use before their deposition within the tomb.[229] Out of 304 ceramics tested at the Gilcrease, only 46 exhibited signs of use, and out of 63 items at the Museum of the Red River, only 1 demonstrated any evidence of use.[230] Although these are relatively small percentages, they compel investigators to expand upon their definition of West Mexican art as mortuary or funerary ceramics.

Because the procession model lacks provenience, it is difficult to know whether the object was specifically created for the tomb or if it had a life aboveground. Given the aforementioned data and the object's emphatic representation of the living, some scholars

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[226] Day, Pickering, and Butterwick, "Archaeological Interpretations," 148.
[227] Beekman, "Who Did the Western," 90.
[228] Phil C. Weigand and Juan Rodrigo Esparza López, *Informe de Excavaciones 2003-2006 en el Complejo Arqueológico Guachimontones* (D.F., México: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 2008), 48, 141, 325, 326.
[229] Pickering, "Results of External," 144.
[230] Ibid.

have questioned whether the procession maquette is just a mortuary object. This thesis does not take a firm stance against or for the procession model being used in aboveground activity, and it is most likely a question that scholars will not be able to answer definitively without a combination of a provenienced example that can be contextualized with robust archaeological data. Instead, with these last few pages, I wish to consider both positions and propose how the tableau may have functioned both within and without the shaft tomb environment.

BEARING WITNESS

In cementing the figurines to the tableau, the procession model possesses an agency over how the spectator interacts with the object. The viewer is guided into a figured world structured around social relations. Surveying the tableaus as a whole, scholars point to their depictions of momentous occasions that disrupt social order, such as burials, feasting events, or marriages.[231] Capturing these social ruptures, the large gatherings depicted within the architectural models "would have been used to consolidate the community as well as the power of the new leader."[232] Rooted in place, the figurines urge the viewer to follow their gazes, contemplate their posture and dress, and mentally wander through such a moment of social and political consolidation.

Manifesting people, performance, and place, the object contains a specificity that extends beyond standardized representations. The presence of the roof-topped house appeals to the actual structures that rimmed circular patios. The figures bear particular

[231] Townsend, "Ancient West," 158-160; Butterwick, "Days of the Dead"; Joanne Pillsbury et al., *Design for Eternity* (New York, NY: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2015), 39-40.
[232] Pillsbury et al., *Design for Eternity*, 40.

offerings, from textiles, to food, to the blood of the figurines piercing their cheeks. While the model's retouched surface may divert serious investigations into the displayed attire, the figurines certainly carried attention to dress, modeled in clay, that signified their social roles and status. More than static representations, these ceramic actors *move*. At the center of the tableau, a figurine turns his head towards the central character undergoing the cheek-piercing ceremony. A woman turns her back to the action, kneeling within the home. Other figurines situated at the side of the house appear to peek out onto the ongoing spectacle, leaning forward as they do so. In its presentation, the tableau offers the spectator a figured world, but one impacted by the realities of the built environment.

Examining the fixed interactions of the figurines, I estimate that the spectator is not offered only "an artist's perspective on the heritage of power in ancient West Mexican societies."[233] In its specificity of people, place, and performance, I venture that the tableau captures a specific mortuary event that depicts not only social roles, but generalized portraits of individuals. As Norwood reminds us, portraits are not limited to representations of exact likeness, as portraiture "relies heavily on the meaning behind the marks on the objects, and the knowledge of the viewer."[234]

Joyce's and Marcus' research corroborates such an idea. The Playa de los Muertos figurines were "selective" and "stereotyped," but were individualized in their treatment of bodily adornment and treatment. Although the figurines carry some standardized features, Joyce does not completely dismiss them as portraits of their

[233] See footnote 213.
[234] See footnote 204.

individual owners. Instead, she states that her definition of the term "resides not in the western notion of portraiture," but in a Mesoamerican practice of representing the embodied self.[235] Likewise, the Oaxacan figurines of Marcus' study were able to recall specific ancestors through their dress and adornment. Thus, the figurines acted as portraits of ancestors through their elaboration of status and rank, rather than through their attention to facial characteristics. Addressing the figurines by the names of their ancestors and treating them as such, the women constructing these small-scale ceramics created intimate portraits of important familial figures.[236]

The figurines of the procession model may similarly act as portraits of individuals. As contemporary peoples witnessing the scene, we lack the inherent knowledge to decode its visual significance. Removed in time from the depicted performances, we cannot recall who these individuals may have been. However, an ancient person beholding the vitality of the narrative and its specificity may have tied the social skin of the figurines to particular people.

If the procession model was used outside of a funerary context, it may have served as a tangible record documenting the legacy and authority of the social group or groups illustrated within the scene. Depicting offerings of blood, food, and other items, the maquette visualizes "key practices that appear to naturalize…social order" in the wake of the death of a community member.[237] Although we cannot be certain about the identity of the deceased, or if the bundle itself does indeed carry a body, the tufted roof

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[235] Joyce, "Making Something," 259.
[236] Marcus, *Women's Ritual*.
[237] Lau, "South America," 232.

comb and feathered design of the roofed structure and bundled object seems telling. Perhaps this paralleling between the two forms was meant to underscore the connection between them both, linking the power of the deceased with the power of the structure and space itself.

Given the polyvalent role of figurines, the procession model may have also served as a template for social behavior during times of social upheaval and consolidation. Each person plays a part in the narrative of the entire scene, carrying particular items and performing particular roles. Their cemented arrangement may have served as a precedent for other community members. Just as figurines impacted the development of the body and self through their adornment, so too may the model have dictated how community members should conduct themselves during times of societal rupture. Through their fixed arrangements, the figurine could have potentially "oriented roles that could be assumed by others in subsequent generations."[238]

Placed within the tomb, the model could have acted as a bridge between the deceased and the living. Archeological excavations and architectural models reveal that tombs occasionally occupied space within circular patios.[239] Interred beneath the roof-topped structures built by social groups, the deceased gave genealogical depth to lineages and may have allowed them to claim a connection to the space and cosmological symbolism.[240] Objects such as the house model (see Fig. 17) demonstrate the importance of connecting the living with the dead, as the people feast atop a burial chamber

[238] Ibid, 409.
[239] See footnotes 182 and 183.
[240] See footnote 183.

containing the remains of an ancestor. Located at the base of the model, deceased visually appears to act as a foundation for the descendants seen above. Finds at sites such as Huitzilapa confirm the importance of interacting with and offering to the dead. In the lone shaft tomb placed with a patio space, excavators recovered over "seventy-seven ceramic vessels…were laden with food offerings: pots, plates, gourd-shaped vessels, water jugs, and bowls…This pottery was associated with funerary rites and ideological activities carried out by the elite group of the community."[241] Thus, an object's placement in the grave did not become dormant, but manifested a potent link between ancestor and descendants.

West Mexican representations of deceased ancestors communing with and in the presence of the living cohere to a pan-Mesoamerican tradition of materializing ancestors through effigies, stelae, or shrines. Stela 40 at Piedras Negras (Fig. 36) shows Itzam K'an Ahk II offering *pom*, or copal, to a figure entombed below.[242] The stela's hieroglyphic text refers to the bundled woman as an ancestor. Combined, the text and image indicate the "importance of making ceremonial contact with ancestors and their material remains."[243]

Housed within a shaft tomb, the procession model may have served as a similar medium between the living and the deceased. The maquette gives permanence to the ephemeral, crystallizing social interactions and performance that were vital to the

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[241] Mestas C. and de la Vega, "Some Interpretations," 275.
[242] Megan E. O'Neil, "Sculptural Dialogues across Time and Space," in *Engaging Ancient Maya Sculpture at Piedras Negras, Guatemala*(Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), 111.
[243] Ibid.

sustenance of the community. This miniaturization of the social world may have allowed the deceased to access their descendants above. Additionally, as Patricia A. McAnany states, "…ancestors are created through the performance of death-related rituals. Moreover, categorical frames of ancestry – inscribing status and value to a memory of the dead – were created and politically maintained through social memory and the recursive performance of death anniversaries."[244] The materialization of the deceased's procession cements the performance of his bundle in clay, permanently capturing his transition from the dead to living ancestor. Placed within their burial, the procession model may have solidified this process and transformation, ensuring that the deceased remained a dynamic ancestral force.

[244] Patricia A. McAnany, *Living with the Ancestors: Kinship and Kingship in Ancient Maya Society* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2013), xxv.

Conclusion

Although they "represent a speech that we do not completely understand today," figurine theory brings us closer in understanding how these unprovenienced objects may have been used within antiquity.[245] It places small-scale representations at the forefront of large-scale phenomena, purporting that figurines actively "play a role in shaping the thoughts, behaviors, and customs of people."[246] In their emulation of the body and natural world, they guide how people produce and present their social selves as well as how they structure the world around them.

In their representation of performance and the built environment, West Mexican maquettes carry great influence, directing what the viewer sees. As Bailey notes, a model "limits the range of variation that a spectator's perception may experience."[247] Rather than drawing inferences from a figural scene which can be manipulated and moved by the viewer, the tableaus root their ceramics actors in place. Instead, the arrangement of the figurines, the rendering of the built environment, and the specificity of the event guide us in making meaning out of the panoply of iconography.

Depicting a scene of communal gathering, the procession model draws upon the dynamic socio-political landscape of the Occidente. Repeatedly, maquettes like the procession tableau base their ceramic actors within patio spaces that were critical arenas for social performance. Capturing the architectural landscape, the procession model miniaturizes this potent setting of negotiation, as the various social groups ringing the patio competed for dominance within the space. Thus, interpretations that seek to limit West Mexican maquettes to narratives of egalitarianism fail to address the complexity of

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[245] See foonote 31.
[246] Halperin and Faust, "Approaching Mesoamerican," 11.
[247] Bailey, "The Anti-rhetorical Power," 119.

a society that did not define itself based on strict dichotomies of 'corporate' versus 'exclusionary'.

Interestingly, even in its depiction of specific people and places, my analysis demonstrates that the procession model may have occupied a fluid role within its respective context. Just as figurines cannot so easily be categorized as either portrait or generalized social role, so too do maquettes possess a multivalent role. In their specificity, the objects may actually capture the dynamism of an actual historical event. Recollecting the adornment and roles of the people, the maquette could potentially be a living document of an actual procession. On the other hand, by arranging social skins and performances atop its surface, the tableau may have served to structure the social behavior of the living. Finally, once placed in the grave, the object may have served as a material, tangible link between the living and the dead.

Much more work remains to be done in analyzing these tableaus and other West Mexican figurines. They remain enigmatic due to a lack of provenience and continue to puzzle scholars about their contexts and social significance. Yet, there is no denying that they were objects imbued with socio-political meaning. Rooting bodies in spaces that served as critical arenas for social performance amplifies the socialized bodies that the tableau displays. In turn, one can imagine that these staged social skins may have had an effect on the spectator viewing them. Overall, architectural models offer power glimpses into the socio-political landscape of the Occidente and invite investigation into questions of individuality and collectivity, social and ritual practices, and the ways in which architecture and action were both scaled up and scaled down in West Mexican artistic traditions.

Figures

Figure 1. Ritual Procession diorama, Ixtlán del Río, Nayarit, Mexico. 300 BCE - 300 CE, Clay, GM 54.7888. Source: Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Figure 2. Aerial shot of Ritual Procession diorama, Ixtlán del Río, Nayarit, Mexico. 300 BCE - 300 CE, Clay, GM 54.7888. Source: Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Figure 3. Volador" Diorama, Ixtlán del Río, Nayarit, Mexico, 1000 BCE - 700 CE, Clay, GM 54.7265. Source: Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Figure 4. Map of North and West Mexico. Source: *Greater Mesoamerica: The Archaeology of West* by Shirley Gorenstein and Michael S. Foster.

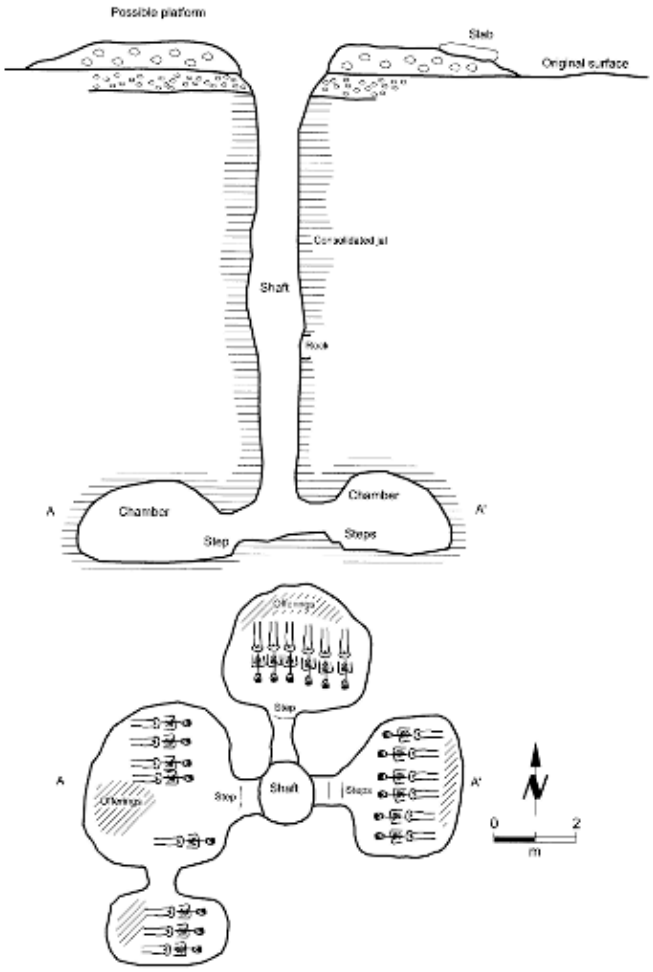

Figure 5. Plan of a shaft tomb. Source: Drawing by Phil C. Weigand.

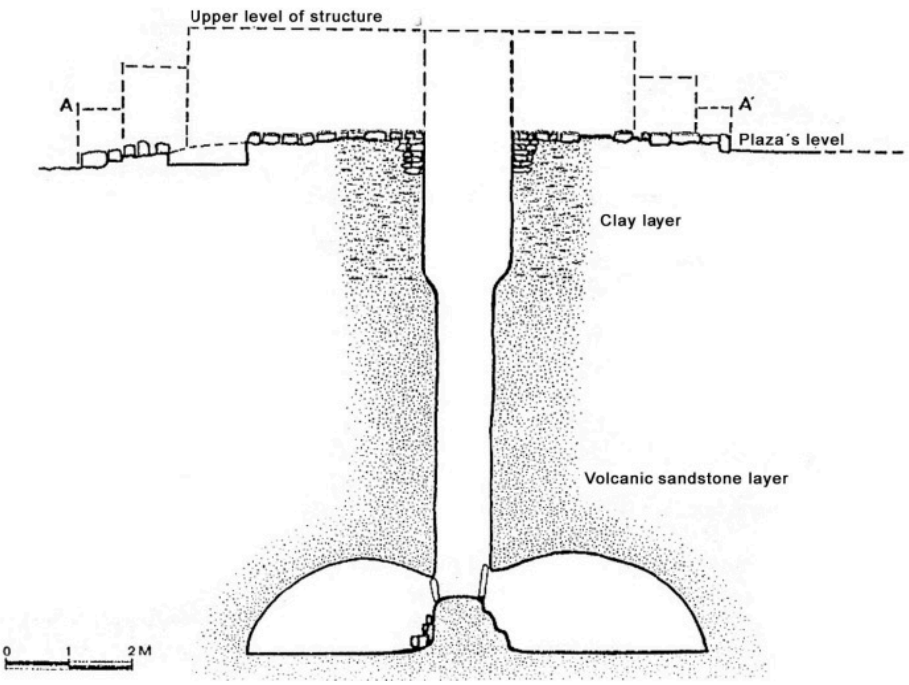

Figure 6. Image showing shaft tomb at Huitzilapa beneath surface architecture. Source: "Some Interpretations of the Huitzilapa Shaft Tomb" by Lorenza López Mestas C. and Jorge Ramos de la Vega.

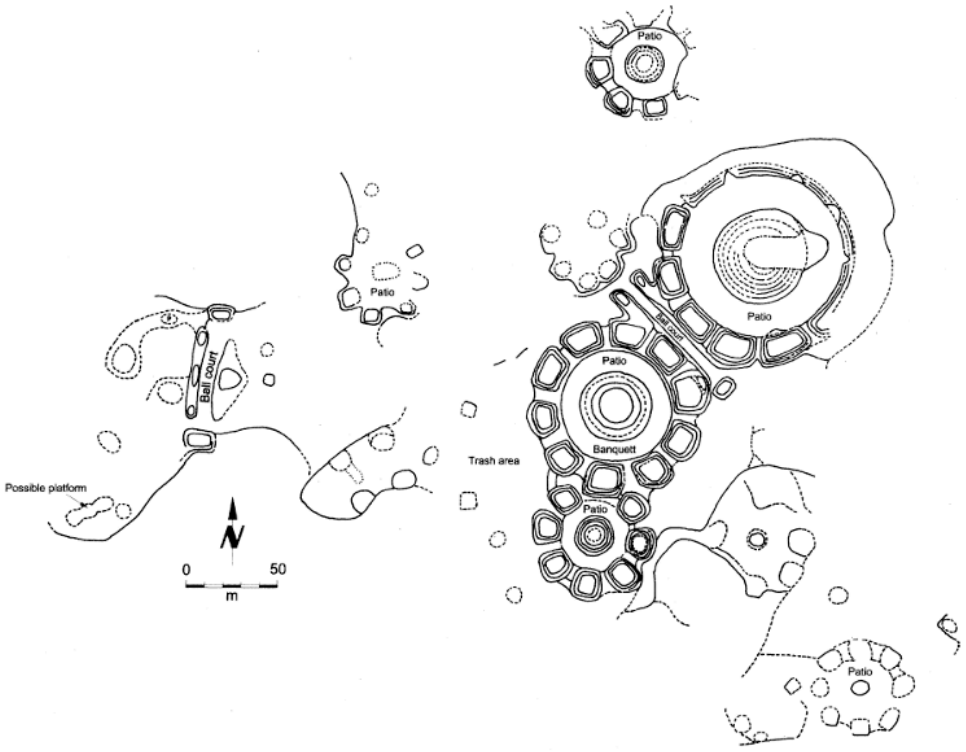

Figure 7. Site of Teuchitlán-Guachimontones with guachimontones. Source: Drawing by Phil C. Weigand.

Figure 8. Ballplayer figurines from El Opeño. Source: Archivo Digital MNA.

Figure 9. Vessel in the Shape of Four Houses. Colima, Mexico. 200 B.C.–A.D. 200. Ceramic. Source: Princeton University Art Museum.

Figure 10. Double temple excavated from the Chametla, Sinaloa. Source: https://www.debate.com.mx/mazatlan/Busqueda-de-mas-piezas-arqueologicas-en-Chametla-20140726-0004.html

Figure 11. Circle Dance Group, Tuxcacuesco-Ortices, Colima/Jalisco, Ceramic, GM 54.2075. Source: Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Figure 12. Early forgery of a Jalisco ceramic. Source: *Antigüedades Mejicanas Falsificadas: Falsificacion y Falsificadores* by Leopoldo Batres.

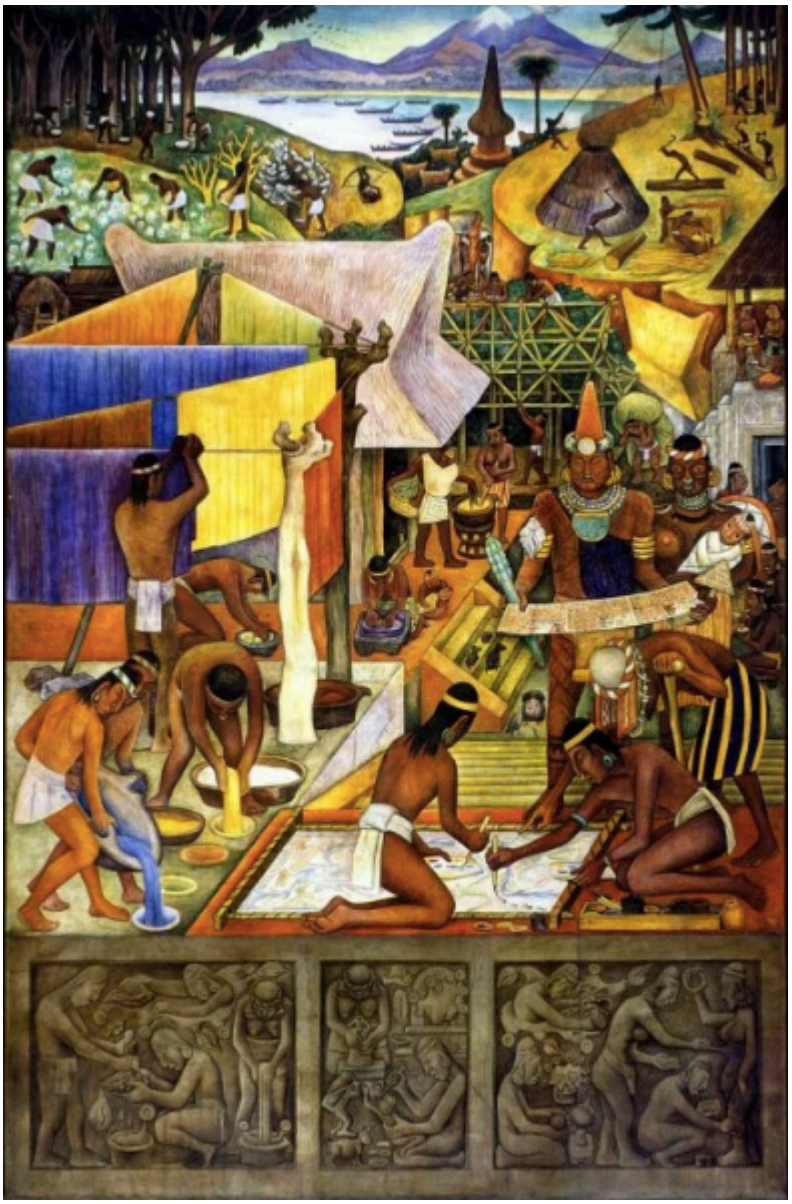

Figure 13. Diego Rivera, *Tarascan Civilization,* 1942. Source: The National Palace, Mexico City, photo courtesy of Bluffton University.

Figure 14. Detail from the *Tarascan Civilization*. Source: The National Palace, Mexico City, photo courtesy of Bluffton University.

Figure 15. Manganese stains on a ceramic figurine. Source: Photograph of Robert B. Pickering.

Figure 16. Puparial remnants on a figurine. Photo: Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Figure 17. House Model. Ixtlán del Río style, Nayarit, Mexico. Ceramic, slip/paint, modern restoration materials. Source: Photograph courtesy of the Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Figure 18. Detail of the procession model, showing people carrying textiles, children, and performing the cheek-piercing ceremony. Ixtlán del Río, Nayarit, Mexico. 300 BCE - 300 CE, Clay, GM 54.7888. Source: Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Figure 19. Detail of the procession model showing people performing the cheek-piercing ceremony, balancing plates of food or incense, or playing musicians instruments. Ixtlán del Río, Nayarit, Mexico. 300 BCE - 300 CE, Clay, GM 54.7888. Source: Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Figure 20. Detail of the procession model showing a woman kneeling inside the house. Source: Gilcrease Museum. Ixtlán del Río, Nayarit, Mexico. 300 BCE - 300 CE, Clay, GM 54.7888. Source: Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Figure 21. Detail of the procession model showing a figure kneeling beside the house with a stack of incense or food. Ixtlán del Río, Nayarit, Mexico. 300 BCE - 300 CE, Clay, GM 54.7888. Source: Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Figure 22. Detail of the procession model showing a person relaxing against the house with another woman kneeling before a stack. Ixtlán del Río, Nayarit, Mexico. 300 BCE - 300 CE, Clay, GM 54.7888. Source: Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Figure 23. Detail of the procession model showing a central duo participating in the cheek-piercing ceremony. Ixtlán del Río, Nayarit, Mexico. 300 BCE - 300 CE, Clay, GM 54.7888. Source: Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Figure 24. Procession model. Ixtlán del Río, Nayarit, Mexico, 300 BCE - 300 CE, Clay, GM 54.2076: Source: Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Figure 25. Ceramic model depicting a procession. Source: Drawing by Kathy Beekman, from *Anecdotal Sculpture of Ancient West Mexico* by von Winning and Hammer.

Figure 26. “Como muría el Caçonci y las cirimonias con que le enterravan” (Of the way cazonci died and the ceremonies with which they buried him). *Relación de Michoacán*, fol. 29v. Source: Real Biblioteca del Monastrio de El Escorial, San Lorenzeo de El Escorial, Spain, C IV 5.

Figure 27. Circle group showing zoomed out view of the circular space. Ixtlán del Río, Nayarit, Mexico. A.D. 100-800. Ceramic and pigment. Source: Art Institute of Chicago.

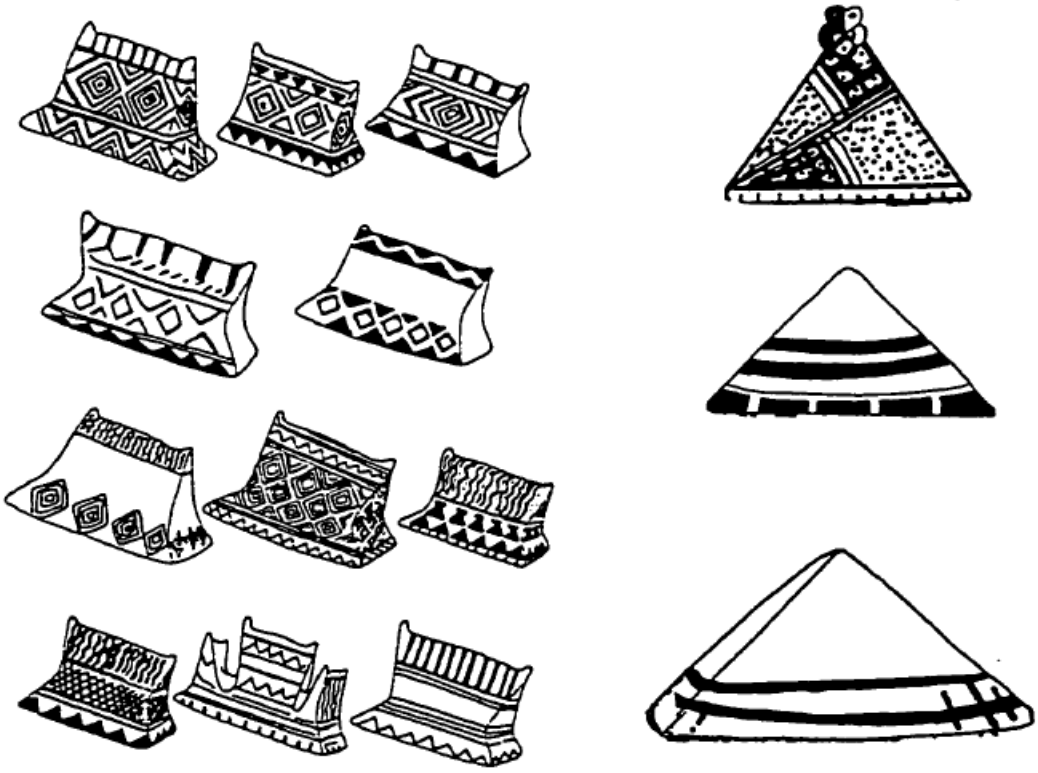

Figure 28. Roof shapes and painted designs of West Mexican architectural models.
Source: On left, from *Anecdotal Sculpture of Ancient West Mexico* from von Winning and Hammer, and on right, "Days of the Dead" by Butterwick.

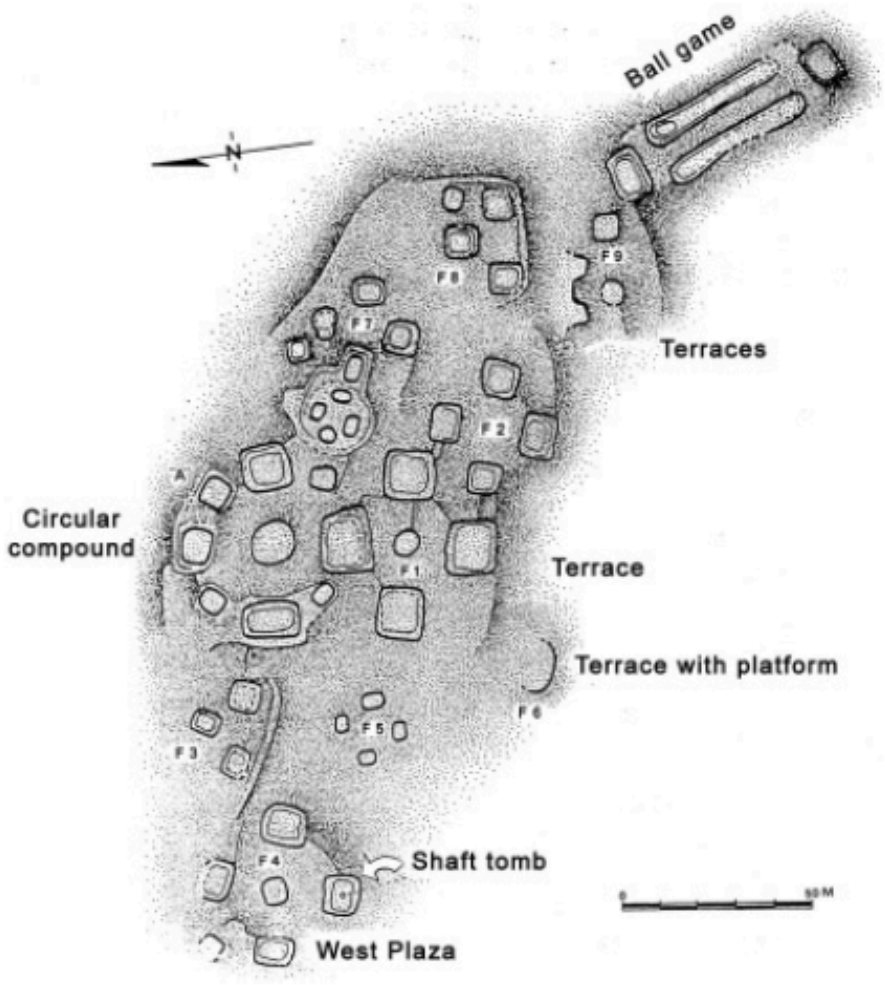

Figure 29. The site of Huitzilapa. Source: Drawing by Phil C. Weigand.

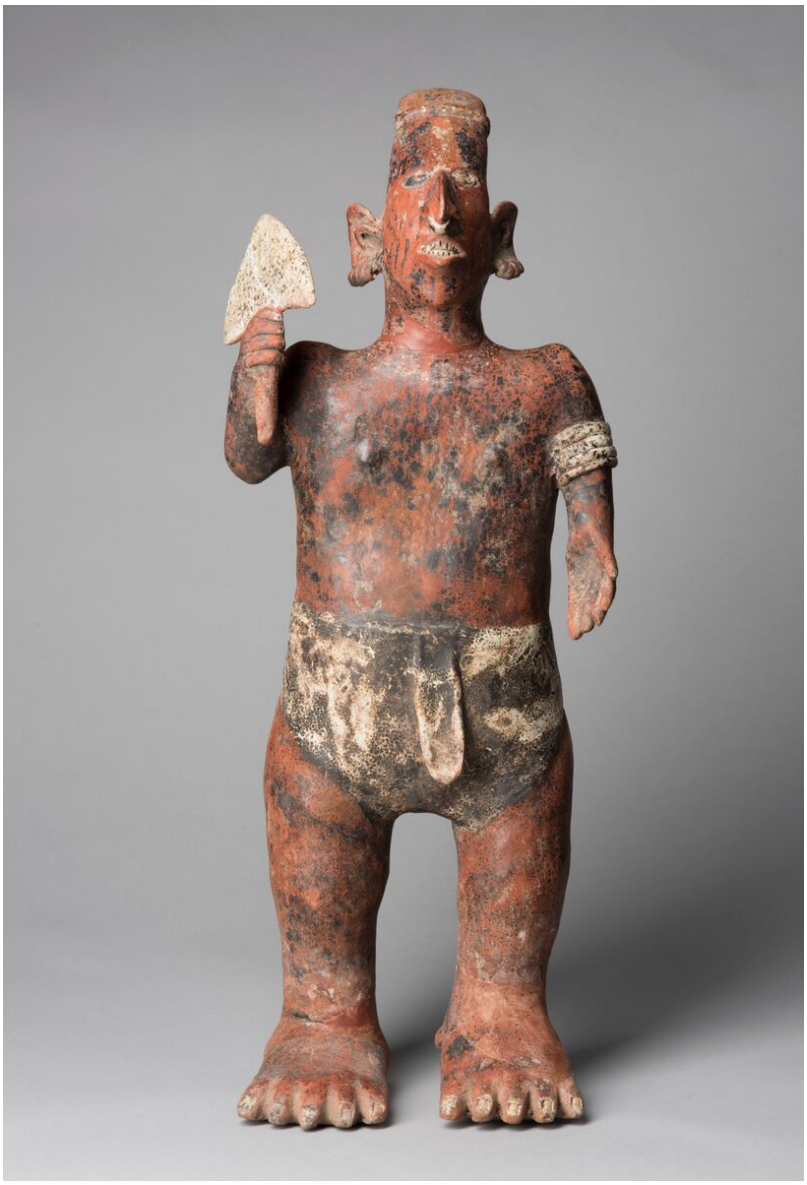

Figure 30. Male hollow figurine, San Sebastian, Nayarit/Jalisco, Mexico. GM 54.2089. Source: Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Figure 31. Male figurine, Ixtlán del Rio, Nayarit, Mexico. 300 BCE - 300 CE. Clay, slip, paint. GM 54.1716 Source: Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Figure 32. Female figurine, Ixtlán del Rio, Nayarit, Mexico. 300 BCE - 300 CE. Clay, slip, paint. GM 54.1717 Source: Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Figure 33. Seated Female with a Bowl, Lagunillas Style 3, Nayarit, Mexico. 200 BCE – 200 CE. Ceramic. Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Figure 34. Teotihuacán style two-part censer in the form of an architectural model, A.D. 400–550. Ceramic with pigment. Source: The Princeton University Art Museum.

Figure 35. Base of ceramic sculpture from El Ujuxte. Source: Photograph by Michael W. Love.

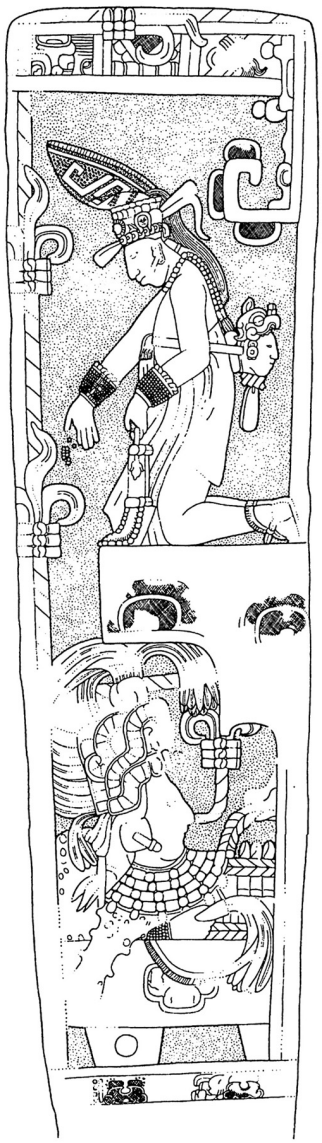

Figure 36. Stela 40 at Piedras Negras. Source: FAMSI.

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